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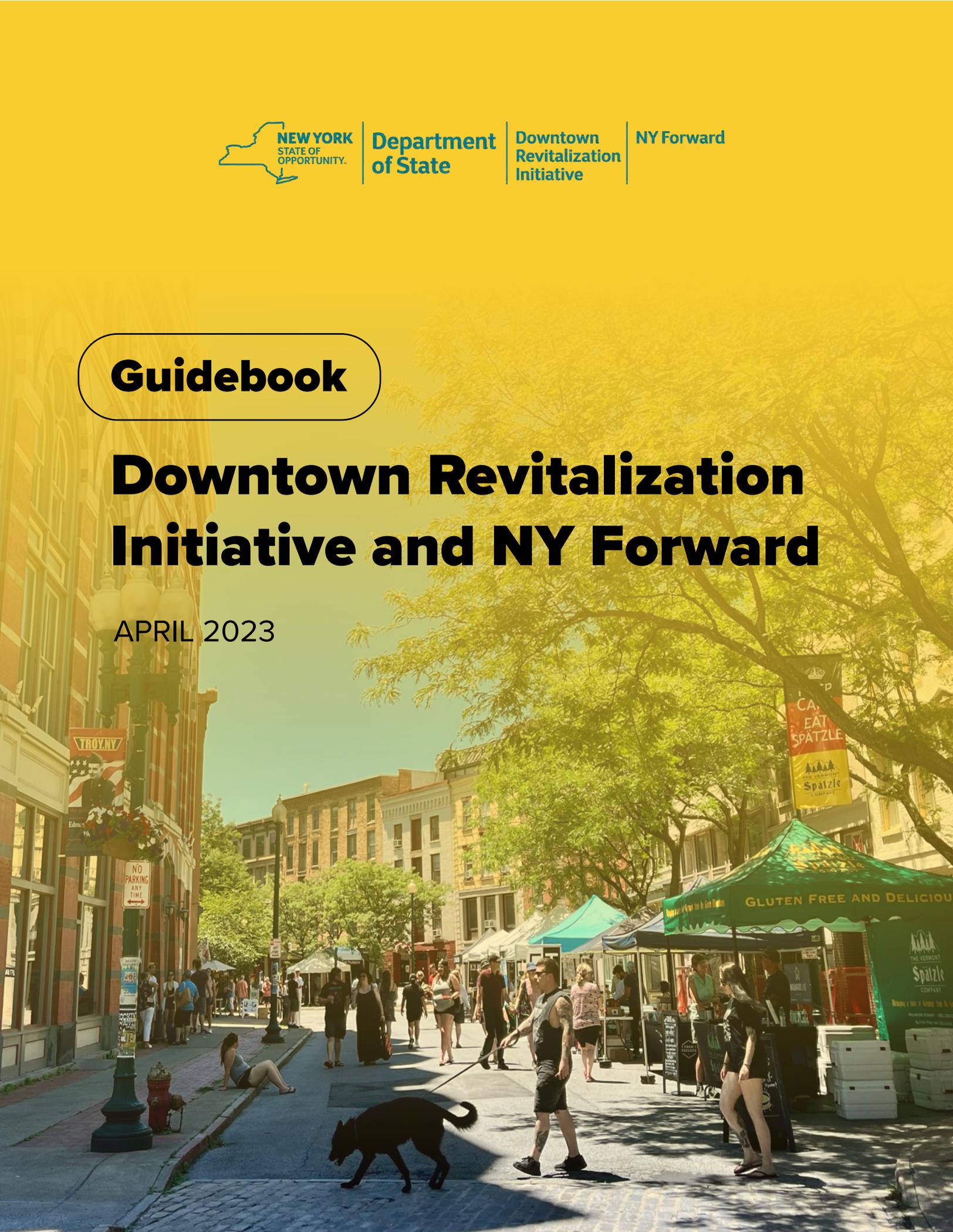
Downtown
Revitalization
Initiative

NY Forward

Guidebook

Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward

APRIL 2023



Introduction

In my tenure as Secretary of State, I have had the good fortune to visit so many of the communities throughout the State that have received Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funding in the first five rounds of the program. These communities have persevered through disinvestment and other challenges and demonstrated that a committed group of civic, political, and business leaders, in partnership with the State, can literally transform a downtown into a vibrant, diverse, and prosperous place. And now, with the Governor's focus on smaller neighborhoods and rural communities through NY Forward (NYF), every downtown—regardless of size, character, or capacity—will have the opportunity to join in NY's burgeoning renaissance in downtown revitalization.

The DRI and NYF are about much more than the individual downtowns they are revitalizing; they are also about reinvigorating entire regional economies. And as we implement the sixth year of the DRI and the first round of NYF, we are also witnessing that broader vision come to fruition—a critical mass of vibrant downtowns in each region are collectively making the Empire State a more attractive place for businesses to invest and families to live. DRI and NYF are indeed the cornerstones of State and regional economic development policy.

The COVID pandemic certainly threw our downtowns another curveball; some pundits even sounded the death knell for downtowns. But rather than slowing or reversing the progress we've made, NY's downtowns once again rose to the challenge by supporting small businesses, building new housing, and creating safe, enjoyable, and accessible streetscapes and public spaces. NY's downtowns are truly resilient!

In addition to creating vibrant downtowns and expanding economic development opportunities, the DRI and NYF have produced myriad ancillary benefits. These programs are helping the State meet its nation-leading climate change goals by building communities that are less dependent on automobiles and partnering with NYSERDA to develop green, energy-efficient projects. The DRI has already invested in hundreds of new housing units—affordable, mixed-income, and market-rate—to help achieve the Governor's bold housing plan. And DRI/NYF projects contribute to the development of the Governor's Master Plan on Aging by creating healthy, accessible, and equitable communities for people of all ages and abilities.

The DRI and NYF succeed because they are built on partnerships—inter-agency, public/private, and State/local. Our sister agencies—HCR, ESD, NYSEDA, and others—work closely with us to help communities access and navigate state resources holistically and effectively. Our private sector partners ensure that projects are completed on time and leverage additional investments as a result of the momentum that the revitalization efforts have set in motion. And the communities themselves weave all the pieces together into a coherent whole that characterizes a complete and vibrant downtown.

This Guidebook will help participant communities to develop their Strategic Investments Plan and embark on the journey toward revitalization that lies ahead.

Robert J. Rodriguez
Secretary of State



| NYF Announcement for Manhattan's Garment District (NYF Round 1)

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State Agencies

New York Department of State (DOS)

New York Department of State plays a critical role in helping to reinvigorate the State's economy and make its communities more livable. The Office of Planning, Development, & Community Infrastructure (OPDCI) at the DOS increases resilience and sustainable growth of New York communities by advancing progressive land use solutions and community-based development. This is accomplished through effective plan-then-act strategies that result in catalytic investments that stimulate community revitalization, and preserve, protect, and enhance the State's coastal and natural resources.

Empire State Development (ESD)

Empire State Development is New York State's primary economic development arm. ESD's mission is to promote a vigorous and growing state economy, encourage business investment and job creation, and support diverse, prosperous local economies across New York State.

New York Division of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR)

New York State Division of Homes and Community Renewal is the State's affordable housing agency. HCR's mission is to build, preserve, and protect affordable housing and increase homeownership throughout New York State.

New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA)

New York State Energy Research & Development Authority is a public-benefit corporation dedicated to promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources. NYSERDA's mission is to advance clean energy innovation and investments to combat climate change; improve the health, resiliency, and prosperity of New Yorkers; and, to deliver benefits equitably to all.



| Downtown Haverstraw (DRI Round 5)

SECTION 1.0

Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward (NYF)

In this Section:

SECTION 1.1 Purpose of this Guidebook

SECTION 1.2 Introduction to the DRI and NYF Programs

SECTION 1.3 Planning Process Overview

SECTION 1.4 Roles and Responsibilities



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SECTION 1.1

Purpose of this Guidebook

This guidebook provides a detailed overview of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward planning processes. It is intended to serve as a resource for municipal officials and staff, project sponsors, and the general public.

Topics Covered in the Guidebook

This guidebook focuses on the planning process associated with the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward (NYF) programs. The DRI and NYF programs use an innovative "plan-then-act" strategy. All communities awarded DRI/NYF funding will undertake a targeted, community-based planning exercise. The process begins with the development of a downtown vision and goals and an assessment of the downtown area, and then shifts to identifying and developing proposed projects.

At the end of the planning process, communities will identify a slate of projects that are aligned with the State's and locality's goals for the DRI/NYF program. These projects are then submitted to the State for funding consideration. With the support of several State agencies and a consultant team, each community will prepare a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). The SIP is the final plan that results from the DRI/NYF planning process. The SIP will describe the unique challenges and opportunities for the revitalization of downtown, present the

community's vision for the future of the area, and propose transformative projects that may be realized with an investment of DRI/NYF funds.

This guidebook is organized by the key activities that each community will undertake as part of the planning process and include:

- Public engagement
- Downtown profile and assessment
- Vision, goals, and revitalization strategies
- Project identification and development
- Project implementation

SECTION 1.1

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDEBOOK

Who Should Use the Guidebook?

This guidebook is intended to be a resource for anyone involved in a DRI or NYF planning process, including the Local Planning Committee, municipal officials and staff, project sponsors, and the general public. The guidebook provides an overview of the planning process, describes key deliverables, and defines the State's expectations.

You can use the guidebook to:

- Understand what to expect once a community is awarded DRI or NYF funding
- Better understand the roles and responsibilities of key participants in the planning process
- Learn about the different ways to become involved in the planning process
- Better understand how a community will identify, develop, and ultimately select proposed projects to recommend to the State for DRI or NYF funding
- Learn more about the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) that a community will develop, with the support of State agencies and a consultant team
- Learn what happens after the SIP is submitted and the State announces project awards



| Secretary of State Rodriguez on a Site Visit to Newark (DRI Round 5)

SECTION 1.2

Introduction to the DRI and NYF Programs

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward programs focus on creating healthy, vibrant, walkable downtowns that catalyze sustainable economic development and accrue numerous economic, social, and environmental benefits to the locality, the region, and the State as a whole.

Business and development leaders recognize that downtown communities, which offer a high quality of life and a critical mass of diverse public amenities and activities, can serve as catalysts for increased and sustainable local economic development. Investments that re-energize commercial cores attract a diverse population of new residents and visitors of varying ages, incomes, and interests, thereby strengthening the customer base for local businesses and providing the reliable workforce needed to attract and retain employers and grow the regional economy.

Government leaders recognize that focusing investment in commercial centers is also fiscally responsible. Compact development lowers the cost of delivering essential government services (police, fire, emergency medical) and reduces demand for costly new infrastructure, making local government budgets more efficient and reducing the burden on taxpayers. In addition, compact, mixed-use development is energy efficient and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. By focusing development in its downtown, a community can reduce its carbon footprint by promoting the use of public transit, making places more walkable, and reducing dependence on private vehicles.

SECTION 1.2

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NYF PROGRAMS

DRI and NYF Program Goals

The core goals of the Downtown Revitalization (DRI) and NY Forward (NYF) programs are summarized in the box to the right. As part of the DRI/NYF planning process, each community will use these goals as a starting point to develop its own set of localized goals that support its vision for revitalization. The State's programmatic goals and the community's local goals should guide the entire DRI or NYF planning process, inform project development and selection, and be clearly reflected in each community's Strategic Investment Plan.



DRI and NY Forward Program Goals



Create an active downtown with a strong sense of place.



Attract new businesses that create a robust mix of shopping, entertainment, and service options for residents and visitors, and that provide job opportunities for a variety of skills and salaries.



Enhance public spaces for arts and cultural events that serve the existing members of the community but also draw in visitors from around the region.



Build a diverse population, with residents and workers supported by complementary diverse housing and employment opportunities.



Grow the local property tax base.



Provide amenities that support and enhance downtown living and quality of life.



Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support investments that are more resilient to future climate change impacts.

SECTION 1.2

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NYF PROGRAMS

DRI Program Overview

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) was launched in 2016 to accelerate the revitalization of downtowns in all ten regions of the State so that the downtowns can serve as centers of activity and catalysts for increased local investment. As a cornerstone of the State’s economic development program, the DRI transforms downtown neighborhoods into vibrant centers that offer a high quality of life and become magnets for redevelopment, business growth, job creation, and economic and housing diversity.

The Department of State (DOS) administers the Governor’s DRI in close coordination with Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), Empire State Development (ESD), New York State Energy Research & Development Authority (NYSERDA), and several other State partners.

Community Characteristics

In general, DRI communities:

- Are sizable downtowns with a regional draw;
- Include major employment centers and tourism attractions;
- Provide a walkable network of destinations;
- Are characterized by relatively dense urban development with diverse land uses; and
- Provide multi-modal transportation options (e.g., mass transit, bicycle infrastructure) or have the potential to increase multi-modal infrastructure.

Available Funding for the DRI Round 6

The State has allocated \$10 million to each of the State’s ten Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) regions to make one DRI award of \$10 million. The REDCs are responsible for nominating awardees.



I REDC Regions

SECTION 1.2

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NYF PROGRAMS

NYF Program Overview

NY Forward (NYF) was launched in 2022 to support a more equitable downtown recovery for New York's smaller communities, with a focus on hamlets, villages, and neighborhood-scale commercial centers. Similar to the DRI, the DOS administers the Governor's NYF program in close coordination with HCR, ESD, NYSERDA, and several other State partners. Through the NYF program, these smaller downtowns will receive planning and implementation support needed to attract more businesses, residents, and visitors, while also providing a higher quality of life for all residents.

Community Characteristics

In general, NYF communities:

- Provide important services to the local community/neighborhood in a mixed-use, walkable setting;
- Often feature a distinct sense of place due to the presence of rich cultural, historic, natural, and/or agricultural assets;
- Often have less dense development than a DRI community; however, NYF communities are still compact and walkable; and
- May include villages, hamlets, and neighborhood centers nested within a larger municipality.

Available Funding for NYF

In the first year of the NYF program, each REDC had the option of nominating two communities for \$4.5 million NYF awards or three communities, one of which will receive \$4.5 million and two that will be awarded \$2.25 million. NYF funds are also used to provide robust capacity-building and technical assistance directly to communities throughout each phase of the program.

SECTION 1.2

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NYF PROGRAMS

This table provides an overview of characteristics common to DRI and NYF communities. However, the list is not exhaustive given the unique attributes of the State's downtowns.

| Community Characteristics | |
|---|---|
| DRI | NY Forward |
| Larger, walkable, more dense geographical areas with amenities that serve the regional community | Smaller, walkable, less dense geographical areas with amenities that serve the immediate local community |
| Multi-modal transportation, including mass transit options | More vehicle dependent; patrons mainly arrive by car |
| Employment center for the regional economy | Predominantly service-oriented businesses and employment opportunities. Services may include maintaining employment and job growth |
| Larger, urban tourist center with more attractions spread out over several blocks of development — walkable between multiple nodes of activities/ attractions | Small-town charm – with heritage, antiques, cottage, agriculture and other niche based tourism In NYC, Business Improvement District (BID)-scale residential-focused districts |
| Availability or potential for rail/bus/ferry public transportation making Transit Oriented Development possible | Vehicle dependent with limited public transportation potential. Residential, or rural agricultural centric development |
| High-density development: most buildings are three or more stories; buildings contain a number of uses and tenants; there is greater square footage of built space per acre | Low-density: most buildings are two to four stories; buildings contain a few uses and tenants; there is lesser square footage of built space per acre |
| Existing or potential for higher density buildings, multi-story buildings with opportunities for upper story housing | Lower density - Two to four story buildings with opportunities for upper story housing |

SECTION 1.2

INTRODUCTION TO THE DRI + NYF PROGRAMS

The following table is an overview of the common types of projects and project characteristics for DRI and NYF communities and is intended to be a guide for communities. It is not an exhaustive list of project types or characteristics.

| Potential Projects | |
|---|--|
| DRI | NY Forward |
| Larger private, mixed-use projects | Smaller projects focused more on building renovation and redevelopment and activation of upper-stories (ex: housing, additional commercial) rather than new construction |
| Adaptive reuse | Adaptive reuse |
| New public construction projects on developable properties, creating new public spaces | Projects that deal primarily with vacancy and rehabilitation, but may include new construction or creation of new public space |
| Projects that elevate urban- and employment-based downtown qualities and enhance the regional draw of the DRI area | Projects that elevate specific cultural and historical qualities that enhance the feeling of local charm |
| Wayfinding projects to connect the network of amenities and attractions distributed over several commercial corridors | Tight commercial activity area with opportunity to enhance cultural heritage through signage or historic markers |

SECTION 1.3

Planning Process Overview

Introduction

Both the DRI and NYF programs employ an innovative “plan-then-act” strategy that couples strategic planning with immediate implementation. Communities are paired with a consultant team and a project manager from the DOS who will guide them through a targeted, community-based planning process focused on the development of a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP).

The SIP will build upon the community's DRI/NYF application, including the preliminary community vision for revitalization and the proposed project list. The planning process will refine the vision, develop actionable goals and strategies, and identify a suite of complementary and transformative projects to help the community achieve its vision for downtown revitalization.

In each community selected to participate in the DRI or NYF program, a Local Planning Committee (LPC) comprised of local and regional leaders, stakeholders, and community representatives intended to represent diverse interests is convened to oversee the planning process and the development of the SIP. Over the course of the planning process, the LPC — with significant support from the State team and a consultant team — will work closely with the local community to:

- Develop a clear and concise downtown profile and assessment to articulate the story of the region and the downtown and identify key challenges and opportunities.
- Review and refine the vision statement included in the DRI/NYF application.

- Establish goals and strategies to achieve the community's vision.
- Identify, develop, and evaluate projects that could advance the community's vision, goals, and strategies for revitalization.
- Develop detailed project profiles for each project that the LPC recommends for DRI/NYF funding (the LPC will identify a final slate of projects in excess of the available DRI/NYF funding).
- Undertake broad public engagement throughout the entire planning process to solicit input, shape the community's vision for downtown, identify projects, and build support for plan implementation.

A consultant team will compile the SIP, which will be submitted to the State. Following the final submission of the SIP to the State, a multi-agency State team will review each project recommended for DRI/NYF funding. A subset of the projects submitted in the SIP will be awarded funding by the State.

Following the review period, project awards will be announced by the State. Project contracts will be negotiated and executed between project sponsors and relevant State agencies shortly after the award announcements. The contracts will be administered by a variety of agencies and authorities, with the majority held by the DOS, ESD, and HCR. In general, awarded project funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis.

SECTION 1.3

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

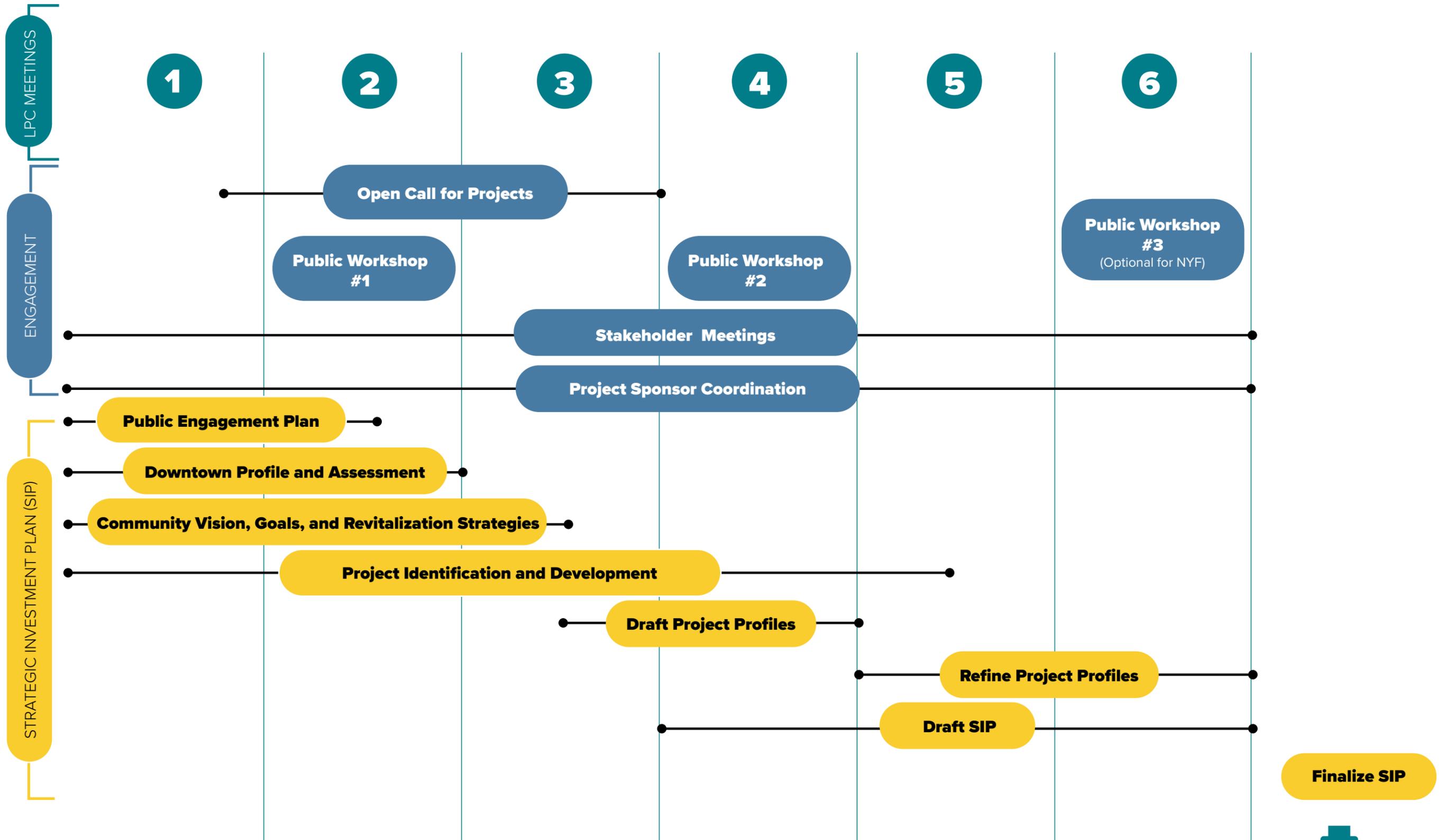
Summary of Key Steps in the Planning Process

All deliverables associated with each step will be developed by the consultant team, with guidance from the LPC.



Typical DRI/NYF Planning Process and Key Deliverable Schedule

DRI AND NYF GUIDANCE



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SECTION 1.3

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The following sections provide an overview of the key elements of the DRI and NYF planning processes. Detailed descriptions of each element are provided in Sections 2.0 through 5.0.

Public Engagement

Transparent, open, and ongoing public engagement is a critical component of the DRI/ NYF planning process and the development of the SIP. Public engagement shall occur throughout the entire DRI/ NYF planning process to ensure community needs, opportunities, and challenges are identified, to determine potential projects, and to ensure the DRI/ NYF revitalization efforts are supported. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 2.0: Public Engagement](#).

Downtown Profile and Assessment

The downtown profile and assessment shall provide a clear, concise, and compelling narrative that articulates the story of the region and the downtown area and describes the future of the area and region. The profile and assessment should allow the reader to understand why this downtown will benefit from the DRI/ NYF program and provide a logical basis for the projects recommended for DRI/ NYF funding.

The profile and assessment will give the reader a sense of the downtown – its unique characteristics, strengths, and challenges. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive technical description of the downtown akin to what would be included in a comprehensive plan. While the consultant team will collect, analyze, and evaluate the demographics, market conditions, and other characteristics of the downtown to ensure that the project proposals included in the SIP are realistic and appropriate, the downtown profile and assessment will contain only a summary of this information. Further, the profile and assessment should provide some analysis of the downtown area and highlight any relevant key factors or trends. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 3.0: Downtown Profile and Assessment](#).

Community Vision, Goals, and Revitalization Strategies

Informed by the community’s DRI/ NYF application and community input, the LPC will develop a vision statement with corresponding goals and revitalization strategies to guide decision-making about future development and investment in the DRI/ NYF area. The vision statement is intended to be ambitious as well as illustrative of the community’s vision for the future, which will be advanced through the implementation of DRI/ NYF projects. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 4.0: Vision, Goals, and Revitalization Strategies](#).

SECTION 1.3

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Project Development

DRI/NYF projects can be identified in a variety of ways, including the community's application, during an Open Call for Projects, through public engagement, or during the planning process as it advances. Consultant teams will work closely with project sponsors and the LPC to develop and refine proposed projects.

The LPC will recommend a final slate of projects to the State to be considered for DRI/NYF funding. These projects are expected to have positive and transformative impacts on the DRI/NYF community and will be a mix of public and privately sponsored projects. Detailed descriptions of each proposed project will comprise a majority of the SIP. The LPC will select the final slate of projects based on public input, LPC and community priorities, and evaluation criteria established by the LPC based on State requirements. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 5.0: Project Development](#).

Strategic Investment Plan Compilation

The goals of the DRI and NYF programs should be reflected in the SIP developed for each community and the projects identified in each plan. The SIPs, which will be prepared by the consultant teams, are a compilation of the required deliverables described throughout this guidebook. Each SIP will describe the unique challenges and opportunities for revitalization of the DRI/NYF area, present the community's vision for the future of the area, and propose transformative projects that may be realized with an investment of DRI/NYF funds.

SECTION 1.4

Roles and Responsibilities

Overview

The DRI and NYF programs accomplish their goals through a unique State and local partnership that includes the Local Planning Committee (LPC), State staff, municipal representatives, and a consultant team. The LPC is responsible for representing the interests and priorities of the community, while the State staff ensure that the process and deliverables are consistent with the goals, priorities, and requirements of the funding programs. In addition, State and local staff, together with the consultant team, provide expertise, guidance, and technical assistance to develop a SIP that will achieve the vision and goals for revitalization of the downtown, as approved by the LPC.

Local Planning Committee

Each LPC is led by two co-chairs consisting of the local elected official and a member of the Regional Economic Development Council (or their respective designees). General membership in the LPC will include local and regional leaders, community stakeholders, and representatives from interest groups and organizations, as appropriate to the community.

These groups may include, but are not limited to:

- Local and regional government officials;
- Neighborhood associations, homeowners, and renters;
- Property owners, local developers, and real estate agents;

- Chambers of Commerce, local business associations, and business owners;
- Community foundations and community loan funds;
- Local development corporations, housing corporations, industrial development agencies, and business improvement districts;
- Cultural institutions;
- Educational institutions;
- Local non-profit and advocacy organizations, such as environmental organizations and park conservancies; and
- Social and public service organizations, such as local public safety and health care providers, and faith-based organizations.

As representatives of a variety of interests within the community, the LPC members will be responsible for guiding the planning process and helping to identify the most appropriate range of community engagement approaches for the DRI/NYF area. The LPC members will also be expected to take an active role in public outreach and evaluate and select projects for inclusion in the SIP.

LPC members meet regularly to brainstorm ideas, provide direction and feedback to consultant teams, review planning products, and discuss community engagement efforts. All LPC meetings that are open to the public should provide an opportunity for public comment. The

SECTION 1.4

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

LPC members, working with the consultant team and State planners, will determine the most appropriate meeting schedule to accomplish their goals and to deliver an on-time SIP. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 2.3: Local Planning Committee](#).

LPC members will be required to sign a Code of Conduct as a reminder that they must always act in the public interest in their role as LPC members. Any member of the committee with a real or perceived conflict related to a specific project will be required to recuse themselves from voting on or opining on the project that presents a conflict while still participating in decision-making for other projects.

Municipal Representatives

Professional and administrative municipal representatives from the DRI/NYF community may provide local assistance to the consultant team and State team when local resources or expertise are needed. Municipal representatives may be asked to:

- Provide existing data to assist with the development of the downtown profile and assessment;
- Help develop publicly-sponsored projects by providing guidance regarding the municipality's project objectives/ preferences and providing studies, plans, or other documents related to project development;
- Identify any relevant municipal programs and initiatives and/or funding sources that could be leveraged;

- Help secure space for and advertise public events and LPC meetings; and
- Serve as a local point of contact during the DRI/NYF planning process.

As appropriate, municipalities are encouraged to partner with the county or other local or regional entities that may be able to provide technical assistance or other resources.

Project Sponsors

DRI/NYF funding may be awarded to public, not-for-profit, and private entities to implement projects included in the final SIP. Each project must have a project sponsor that has both the capacity and the legal authority to undertake the project and to whom the grant funds may be awarded. A project sponsor must be an entity and not an individual. A final determination will be made by the State following award announcement as to the entity that will hold the DRI/NYF project contract.

All project sponsors, including those for the projects that were in the community's application, are expected to provide project proposal information to the consultant team in order to be considered for DRI/NYF funding. During the planning process, project sponsors will work closely with the consultant team to provide information related to their proposed project, including, but not limited to existing project funding sources, the proposed scope of work and the tasks that will be accomplished with the DRI/NYF funding, and the project sponsor's capacity to implement and maintain the project. For additional information and requirements, see [Section 5.0: Project Development](#).

SECTION 1.4

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Consultant Team

A consultant team, contracted by the State, will be assigned to each DRI and NYF community. The consultant teams are able to provide expertise in an array of planning disciplines, such as public engagement, market analysis, communications, and feasibility assessments. The consultant teams, in close coordination with State staff and the LPC, will lead all public engagement, project identification and development, and creation of all components of the SIP.

At the onset of the planning process, the consultant team will prepare a public engagement plan with input and participation from the LPC, whose members are best positioned to recommend strategies appropriate for engaging their community. In addition, the consultant team will lead the preparation for and facilitation and documentation of all LPC and public meetings/events.

With direction from the State team, guidance from the LPC, and following the requirements articulated in this guidebook, the consultant teams will also prepare all program documents, including the:

- Downtown profile and assessment;
- Downtown vision and goals, and revitalization strategies to achieve the vision and goals; and
- Project profiles.

The consultant will compile these documents into a cohesive Strategic Investment Plan. The consultant team will also assist the LPC in identifying key projects for implementation using DRI/NYF funding and will work with project sponsors to prepare detailed project profiles and analyses that demonstrate the feasibility and potential impact of projects. As needed, the consultant team will conduct additional research, market studies, and outreach to develop and demonstrate the feasibility of proposed projects.

State Team

Each LPC will receive support from a team of State staff. The State team, led by the DOS, will also include staff from HCR, ESD, and NYSERDA. This team will manage the consultant team assigned to the community, assist the consultant team and LPC in meeting preparation, and participate in the preparation and review of DRI/NYF documents.

- The DOS representative will bring planning and community engagement best practices to the process and be able to provide guidance and support for the DRI/NYF planning process, including Smart Growth and climate resilience strategies. The DOS representative will manage the consultant team and act as the liaison and primary point of contact for the State team.

SECTION 1.4

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The HCR representative will provide their knowledge of the community and expertise in housing development, Community Development Block Grants, and HCR grants and programs.
- The ESD representative will provide broad knowledge of past, present, and proposed development in and around the downtown and can provide information about a variety of other State funding programs that can support downtown revitalization.
- NYSERDA staff will support the planning process by providing technical assistance focused on identifying decarbonization strategies across multiple scales – from neighborhoods to individual buildings and sites. NYSERDA will also assist with identifying additional State and federal funding that can be used to achieve decarbonization efforts in DRI/NYF areas.
- Representatives from other State agencies may be engaged, as appropriate, to address the specific needs of each DRI/ NYF community.



| Albany Public Workshop (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 2.0

Public Engagement

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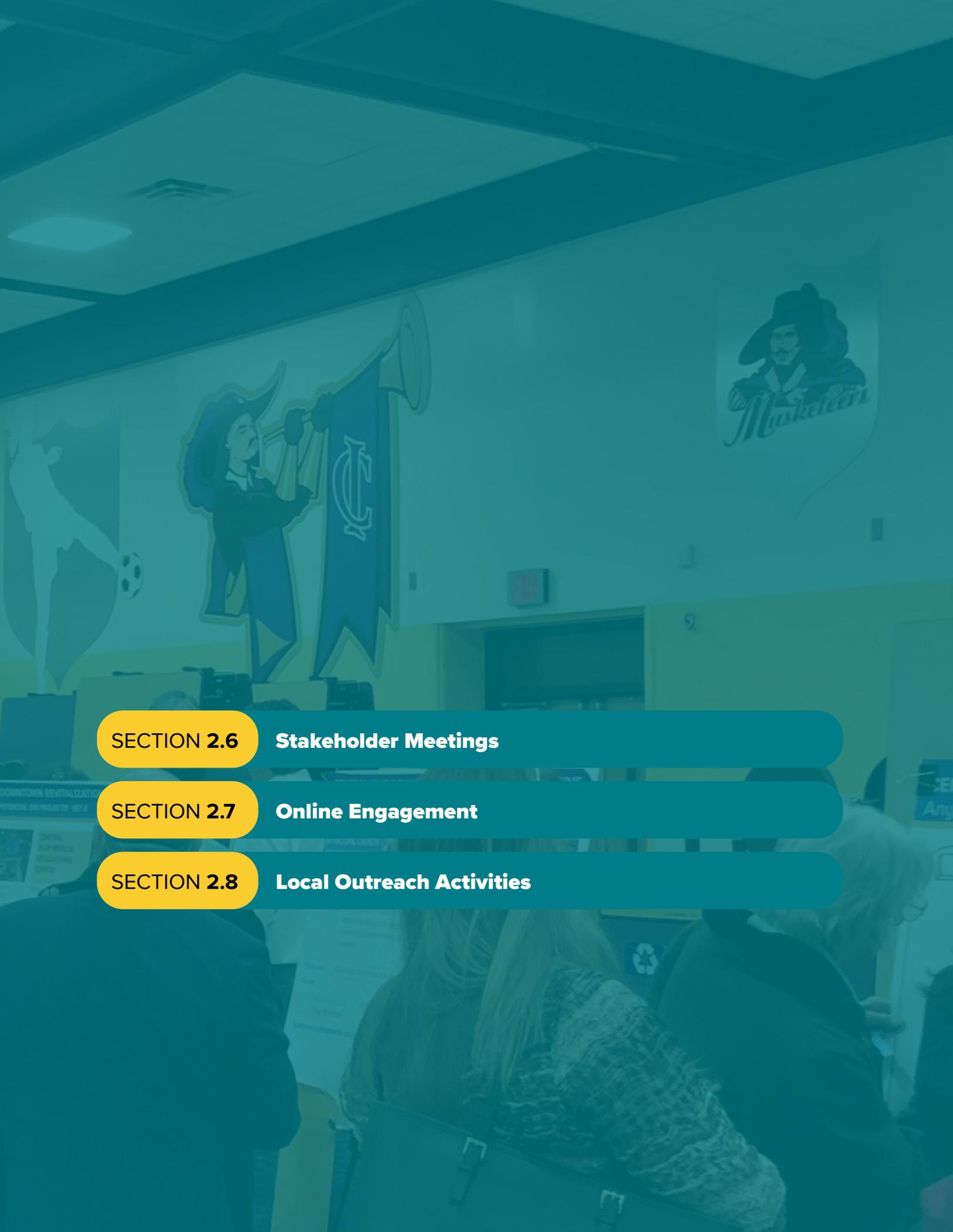
SECTION 2.1 Introduction

SECTION 2.2 Public Engagement Plan

SECTION 2.3 Local Planning Committee

SECTION 2.4 Project Identification

SECTION 2.5 Public Workshops

The background image shows a hallway with several murals on the wall. One mural depicts a man in a long coat holding a banner with a circular logo. Another mural shows a man in a hat and coat, with the word "Muskegon" written in a cursive font below him. In the foreground, the backs of several people are visible as they look at informational displays. The overall scene suggests a community meeting or public engagement event.

SECTION 2.6 Stakeholder Meetings

SECTION 2.7 Online Engagement

SECTION 2.8 Local Outreach Activities

SECTION 2.1

Introduction

Broad, inclusive, and frequent public outreach is an essential component of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward planning processes, as public input plays an important role in the creation of the community's vision and goals and in the identification of projects and development of the Strategic Investment Plan.

Public engagement should begin at the onset of the planning process and continue throughout the development of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). Engagement must be tailored to the local community and may take a variety of forms, with a focus on informing and educating the community about the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward (NYF) programs, soliciting and receiving input on the community's vision, goals, and proposed projects, and building support for SIP implementation.

Engagement activities should encourage participation from a broad and diverse population, and the consultant team must design events that encourage openness and innovation. Events will be held at milestones during the planning process, as described in the following sections.

Local Planning Committee (LPC) members will play a pivotal role in public engagement by helping to identify key individuals and organizations that should be involved in the

planning and implementation process and by determining the best way to involve them. Inclusion and equity are critical to the public engagement process; therefore, outreach strategies must be employed to engage all impacted stakeholders and community members, particularly from often hard-to-reach communities.

The following subsections describe the required engagement components of the DRI and NYF planning processes. Instances where NYF engagement requirements differ from DRI engagement requirements are highlighted in a teal box.

SECTION 2.1

INTRODUCTION

Public Engagement Minimum Requirements:

DRI



LPC Meetings



Public Workshops



Project Website



Local Outreach Activities

NYF



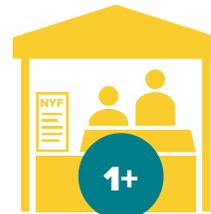
LPC Meetings



Public Workshops



Project Website



Local Outreach Activities

SECTION 2.1

INTRODUCTION

Engagement Schedule

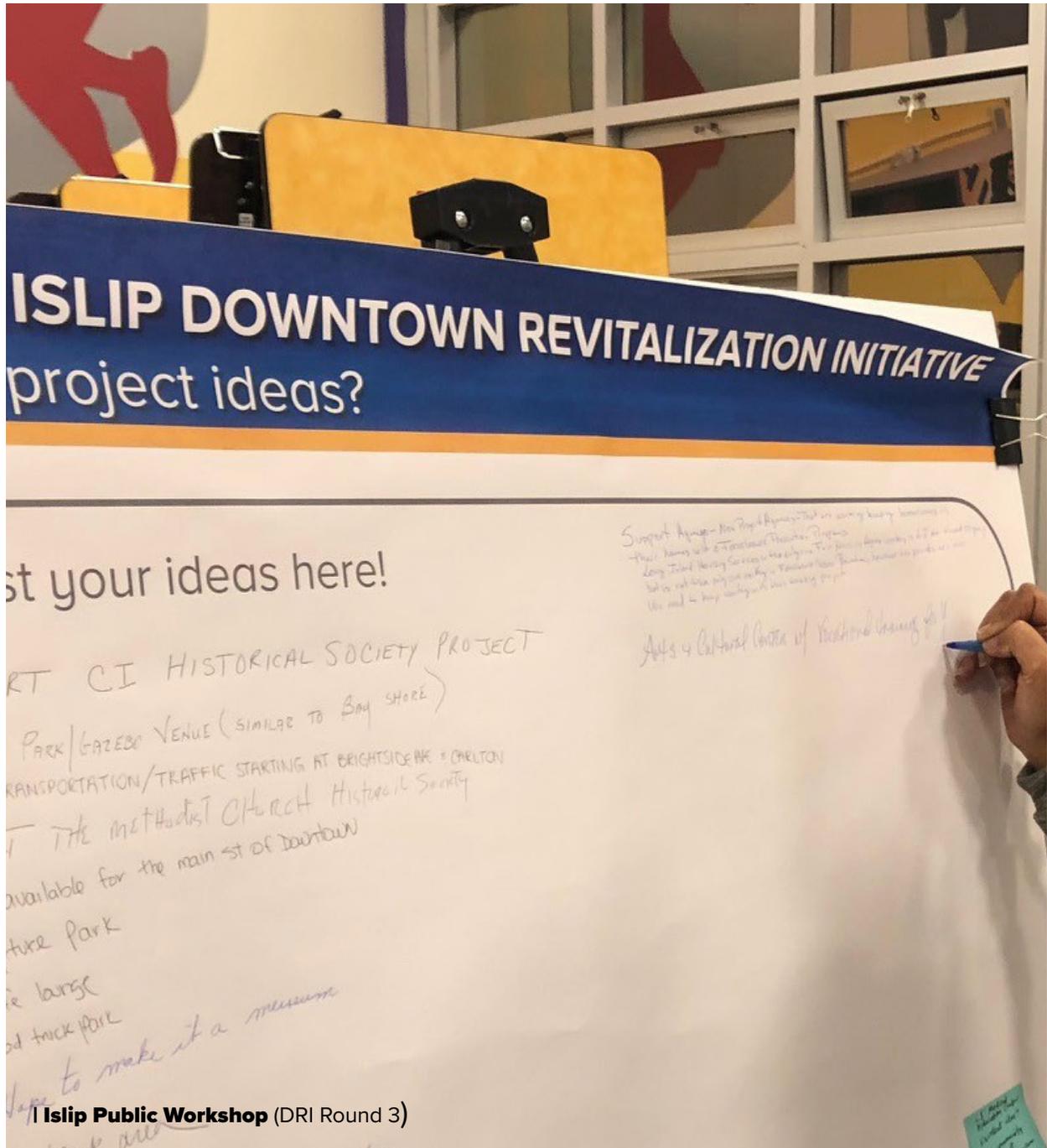
Public engagement should occur early and consistently throughout the entire planning process. The graphic to the right summarizes the anticipated public meetings and engagement activities and the order in which they typically occur in the planning process. The timing of when these activities will occur in the planning process will depend on the needs of the community.

At the onset of the planning process, the consultant team and LPC will develop a Public Engagement Plan tailored to each DRI/NYF community. This plan will outline how the general public will be involved in the planning process. More information about the Public Engagement Plan and each type of required engagement activity are provided in the following sections.

Best Practices for Public Meeting Notification

- Advertise all public meetings with a variety of media, including flyers, postcards, newspapers, municipal mailings such as water bills, social media, the project website, press releases, and email blasts.
- Post all public meetings at public locations, including libraries, community centers, farmer's markets, etc.
- Provide at least two weeks notice in advance of every public meeting.
- Encourage LPC members to share public meeting notices with their professional networks





Islip Public Workshop (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 2.2

Public Engagement Plan

Overview and Purpose

At the onset of the planning process, the consultant team, with input from the LPC and the State team, will develop a Public Engagement Plan that will enable the DRI/NYF community to work towards a shared vision for a more vibrant downtown.

The Public Engagement Plan will be tailored to each DRI/NYF community and outline how to involve the public in the planning process. It should detail the different types of engagement opportunities that will be provided over the course of the planning process, including the purpose, format, schedule, and public notification of each type of engagement. The Plan should carefully consider how to engage an array of hard-to-reach populations (e.g., racial minorities, immigrant populations, low-income populations, the disability community). Importantly, the Public Engagement Plan does not serve as a checklist of required actions, but rather, it is a flexible framework that may be adapted as the planning process unfolds.



Importance of Engaging Hard-to-Reach Populations

Meaningful engagement of hard-to-reach populations throughout this planning process and all public processes is vital to the vibrancy, cultural richness, economic opportunity, and equitable revitalization of communities across New York State. Inclusion of hard-to-reach populations should be considered throughout the development of the Public Engagement Plan and for all public events.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Suggest methods to identify stakeholders, various constituent groups, hard-to-reach populations, and the general public
- Provide input (e.g., engagement techniques, meetings times/locations) for the Public Engagement Plan

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Suggest methods to identify stakeholders, various constituent groups, hard-to-reach populations and the general public
- Provide input (e.g., previously successful engagement techniques, meeting times/location) for the Public Engagement Plan

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Develop a Public Engagement Plan tailored to the DRI or NYF community, taking into account various constituent groups, including hard-to-reach populations
- Incorporate all feedback from the LPC and municipality
- Update and maintain the Public Engagement Plan, as needed, throughout the planning process

SECTION 2.2

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN



| Cortland Public Event (DRI Round 2)

SECTION 2.3

Local Planning Committee

Overview

As the steering body of the process, the LPC will meet regularly to brainstorm ideas, provide direction to the consultant team, review planning products, discuss potential projects, and prioritize actions. The LPC members, working with the consultant team and State planners, will determine the most appropriate meeting schedule to accomplish their goals and to deliver an on-time SIP.

LPC Meetings

All LPC meetings are encouraged to be in person; however, hybrid or virtual-only meetings may be an option based on local considerations and consultation with the State team. The meetings must be open to the public. The extent to which the public will be able to actively participate in a meeting will depend on the purpose and structure of each LPC meeting. At a minimum, time should be reserved at each LPC meeting for public comment.

In general, LPC meetings will cover the topics outlined in the following list. Please note each community's planning process will differ, and therefore the proposed meeting topics may be adjusted to better meet the specific needs of a community.

LPC Meeting #1. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Team introductions
- Overview of the DRI/NYF program
- Familiarize the LPC with the community's application
- Overview of planning process scope and timeline
- Confirmation of the DRI/NYF boundary as compact, walkable, and well-defined
- Input on the Public Engagement Plan and Open Call for Projects
- Input on stakeholders, various constituent groups, and hard-to-reach populations to engage
- Identify opportunities and challenges
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #2. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates
- Downtown profile and assessment highlights
- Visioning exercises
- Public comment

SECTION 2.3

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPC Meeting #3. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process and engagement updates
- Finalize community vision, goals, and revitalization strategies
- Review project evaluation criteria
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration, as appropriate
- Review any proposed boundary amendments that may be needed to incorporate potentially transformative projects
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #4. At this point in the planning process, LPC meetings will shift to focus on developing and evaluating the proposed projects. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Planning process & engagement updates
- Review project evaluation criteria
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify additional project information needed to support decision-making
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #5. Developing and evaluating the proposed projects will continue at this meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Review project evaluation criteria
- Planning process and engagement updates
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify additional project information needed to discuss decision-making
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration
- Public comment

LPC Meeting #6. By the end of this meeting, the LPC should be prepared to finalize the slate of proposed projects recommended for funding. Ideally, only a few projects will need to be removed from consideration at this meeting to arrive at the final slate of projects. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Review of project evaluation criteria
- Review and discuss proposed projects
- Identify projects to remove from funding consideration
- LPC vote on the final slate of proposed projects
- Public comment

Given the smaller scale of NYF communities, there is an option to reduce the number of LPC meetings to no fewer than five by combining the proposed topics in LPC Meetings #4-6 after consultation with the LPC, the State team, and the consultant team.

At the conclusion of all LPC meetings, LPCs will have selected a final slate of proposed projects.

SECTION 2.3

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

LPC Working Sessions

The LPC may hold working sessions, as needed, to dig deeper into an issue, sometimes with the help of non-committee members, such as local businesspersons, labor specialists, academic experts, and neighborhood advocates. Working sessions, which need not be open to the public, provide an opportunity for brainstorming and in-depth discussions focused on specific topics or projects. They also allow for better time management at LPC meetings. No decision-making may occur during these sessions, and information discussed in these sessions will be reported out at LPC meetings. Though not a requirement of the DRI/NYF planning process, working groups may be developed around any topic, such as developing a public engagement plan, identifying projects, and reviewing and discussing proposed projects.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Attend each LPC meeting
- Review all available project materials in advance of each meeting and come prepared for a productive discussion
- Actively participate in dialogue regarding all aspects of the DRI/NYF planning process and project selection
- Help advertise LPC meetings by sharing meeting notifications with colleagues and networks
- Assist in identifying and engaging hard-to-reach populations or representatives
- Disclose any actual or perceived conflicts of interest including recusing oneself as they pertain to project development

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Assist with securing a meeting venue
- Attend each LPC meeting and be prepared to provide information regarding proposed projects sponsored by the municipality
- Help advertise LPC meetings by sharing meeting notifications with the public using municipal outlets

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Lead the planning and preparation for all LPC meetings, including meeting logistics and meeting notifications
- Develop all necessary materials to support LPC meetings and solicit feedback in an engaging, well-informed manner
- Facilitate all meetings
- Set-up and break-down for all meetings
- Develop meeting summaries for all meetings

SECTION 2.3

LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE



I Penn Yan LPC Meeting (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 2.4

Project Identification

Overview

The public engagement process is critical for identifying the projects that will help advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization. These projects can be identified in a variety of ways, including from the community's DRI/NYF application, during an Open Call for Projects, through public engagement, or through the planning process as it advances. Projects may be put forth by public, not-for-profit, and private for-profit entities.

Project Sourcing

There are various ways to identify projects to be considered for DRI/NYF funding. The initial way to identify projects is from the community's DRI/NYF application, in which the community was asked to identify transformative project opportunities. The sponsors of these opportunities must complete a DRI/NYF Project Form and submit the form to the consultant team.

Another means of identifying projects is through the Open Call for Projects, a public process that solicits projects from public, not-for-profit, and private project sponsors. The Open Call for Projects should be initiated following the first LPC meeting or the first public workshop. It will generally be publicized through various outlets in the early months of the planning process. Project sponsors are expected to submit a DRI/NYF Project Form detailing the project proposal. Project sponsors will have at least four weeks to complete and submit the DRI/NYF Project Form through the Open Call.

Public engagement is also an opportunity to identify projects, particularly when engaging the public about community needs and opportunities. The information gathered during public engagement can help inform an existing project proposal or inspire a new project. While projects identified this way may require greater early project development, project sponsors should provide the information requested on the DRI/ NYF Project Form to the consultant team to aid in shaping the proposals into potentially viable projects.

As the planning process advances, new projects may come to light. While these projects may form at a different stage in the planning process than other projects, they will be expected to develop and provide the same information as requested from all other projects.

All submitted project proposals will be reviewed by the LPC and publicly discussed during an LPC meeting.

Impacts to the DRI/NYF Boundary

The project identification process may result in the identification of projects that are adjacent or proximate to the boundary selected by the LPC. The LPC has the ability to recommend and approve minor boundary adjustments to incorporate a project, or projects, that they believe are compelling and support the vision of the DRI/NYF area. These instances should be limited to transformative downtown projects that will advance the goals of the DRI/ NYF area.

SECTION 2.4 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Support for Project Sponsors

In support of project identification, the consultant team will be available to assist project sponsors as they complete the DRI/NYF Project Form and with other project development activities, as needed. Potential options for assistance include hosting a public information session, holding open office hours for project sponsors, or conducting one-on-one assistance with a project sponsor.

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Considerations for Potential Project Sponsors

Considering submitting a proposed project for LPC consideration? Here are a few things to think about prior to submitting your project:

- Do you have a preliminary project budget?
- Do you own the property or do you have site control/permission to implement the proposed project?
- Have you identified any environmental constraints and/or regulatory issues/needs that may affect the project?
- Do you have a business plan?

See [Section 5.0: Project Development](#) for detailed information regarding project eligibility and development.



North Tonawanda Public Workshop
(DRI Round 5)

SECTION 2.5

Public Workshops

Overview

The purpose of public workshops is to solicit ideas and feedback from the public regarding various planning topics applicable to the preparation of the SIP. Public workshops may take various forms including presentations, open houses, and charrettes. Public workshops should have a complementary online component to allow for the public to provide input outside of workshops. These public workshops are intended to be interactive, and should be held at key milestones during the DRI/NYF planning process.

The following section describes the topics that will likely be covered at each public workshop. However, please note that the format and content of each public workshop will vary and should be tailored to meet the unique needs of each community.

Public Workshops

Public Workshop #1. This should occur between the first and second LPC meetings in order to gather information to help the LPC formulate a final vision statement and goals. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Overview of the DRI/NYF program
- Identification of needs, challenges, and opportunities that impact the DRI/NYF community's revitalization
- Solicitation of project ideas
- An interactive component to solicit feedback on community needs, challenges, and opportunities; and community vision and goals

Public Workshop #2. This should occur after the LPC has reviewed all proposed projects in order to inform project development. This event will likely occur around the third or fourth LPC meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- Status update of the DRI/NYF process
- Key findings from the downtown profile and assessment
- Description of the community vision statement and goals
- An overview of proposed projects, including an interactive component to solicit public feedback

SECTION 2.5

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

Public Workshop #3. This workshop may occur after the LPC has voted on the final slate of proposed projects, likely following the final LPC meeting. Alternatively, if the LPC would like public input prior to finalizing the slate of proposed projects, this may occur in advance of the final LPC meeting. Topics to be covered during this meeting include:

- An overview of the community's DRI/NYF journey
- A review of the final list of proposed projects recommended by the LPC for inclusion in the SIP
- Next steps regarding project awards and implementation

Given the smaller scale of NYF communities, there is an option for the community to reduce the number of public workshops from three to two after consultation with the LPC, State team, and consultant team.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Serve as a liaison to the broader community and encourage attendance by helping to advertise meetings and sharing meeting notifications with their colleagues and network
- Actively participate in public workshops

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Help coordinate the logistics of public workshops, including venue recommendations
- Help advertise public meetings by sharing meeting notifications with the public using municipal outlets

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Lead the planning and preparation for all public workshops, including development of meeting flyers and other notifications
- Develop all necessary materials to support the public workshop activities and solicit feedback in a fun, interactive manner
- Facilitate the meeting
- Ensure broad and inclusive participation (e.g., providing translation services, conducting outreach to hard-to-reach populations)
- Set-up and break-down the meeting
- Develop a meeting summary for each event

SECTION 2.6

Stakeholder Meetings

Overview

The purpose of stakeholder meetings is to expand awareness about the DRI/NYF planning process, proactively solicit community needs, opportunities, and project ideas, and seek feedback from individuals and groups associated with and/or impacted by the proposed projects. Stakeholder meetings should include targeted outreach to hard-to-reach populations.

Stakeholder meetings should begin at the onset of the planning process and may require follow-up discussions with other individuals or groups identified by the LPC, municipality, and the State team over the course of the process. Meetings may be conducted through a combination of in-person and virtual meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Recommend stakeholders and community leaders to interview
- Participate as a stakeholder in interviews, as appropriate

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Recommend stakeholders and community leaders to interview
- Participate as a stakeholder in interviews, as appropriate

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Develop and maintain a list of stakeholders
- Coordinate meeting logistics with stakeholders including scheduling and meeting format (virtual vs. in-person)
- Document all conversations with stakeholders
- Summarize and communicate key findings from stakeholder meetings to the LPC



Stakeholders

Stakeholder meetings should be conducted throughout the entire DRI/NYF planning process. Stakeholders to engage with may include the following:

- Business improvement districts
- Non-profit organizations
- Cultural and educational institutions (e.g., schools, libraries, museums)
- Business owners, Chambers of Commerce, professional organizations
- Special interest groups
- Block clubs and other civic groups
- Community leaders
- Organizations working with hard-to-reach populations
- Youth groups
- Municipal staff
- Senior citizen groups

SECTION 2.6

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS



| Brooklyn LPC Meeting (DRI Round 3)



| Owego Engagement Event (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 2.7

Online Engagement

Overview

Online engagement — through various web-based and social media platforms — has increasingly become an important and common method for disseminating public information and obtaining feedback. Online engagement should be used in conjunction with varied forms of in-person outreach. An online presence should be established for each DRI/NYF community, as described below.

Project Website

DRI/NYF municipalities are required to have a project-specific website that is maintained for the duration of the planning process. The project website can be a standalone website created and maintained by the consultant team; or it can be a dedicated page on a municipality's website, with content prepared by the consultant team. The website is intended to serve as a project portal to disseminate project information, advertise public events, post meeting summaries and presentations, provide a way for the public to provide comments, and provide contact information for project-related questions.

The State also maintains websites with information about the DRI/NYF programs and participating communities:

DRI: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/downtown-revitalization-initiative>

NYF: <https://www.ny.gov/programs/ny-forward>

Social Media

Social media may be used to bolster a DRI/NYF community's online presence and reach a broader audience in order to disseminate information about the DRI/NYF planning process, upcoming public events, and as an additional platform to encourage public comment. Social media is not required, and its use will depend on local context and needs.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Identify online platforms that will most effectively engage the local community
- Share social media posts and other online materials with their networks

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Identify online platforms that will most effectively engage the local community
- Share social media posts and other online materials with the public using municipal outlets

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Create a project website
- Develop and maintain online content
- Post regularly to the different online platforms to solicit public input and advertise upcoming meetings

SECTION 2.7

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



Project Website Example

Are you interested in seeing what a project website looks like? Click here to see the project website for Amityville (DRI Round 5):

www.amityvilledri.com



SECTION 2.8

Local Outreach Activities

Overview.

While all public engagement should be locally tailored, the consultant team should plan and facilitate local outreach activities to engage a broad range of constituents. Local outreach activities are specifically tailored to engage the local community. These activities differ from public workshops in that they are geared toward meeting members of the community where they already are. Every DRI community is required to conduct at least two local outreach activities, and each NYF community is required to conduct at least one local outreach activity.

What to Expect

Local outreach activities should focus on developing activities that are unique to the community. While all public engagement should take the local context into consideration, local outreach activities should be unique to the individual community and may include activities like setting up a pop-up event at a local festival or school event (see the next page for more examples). These activities should be customized to share and solicit relevant information that will inform and advance the DRI/ NYF planning process. For example, an activity held at the beginning of the planning process may focus on identifying needs, opportunities, and challenges, visioning activities, or soliciting project ideas. Activities held later in the process may focus on gathering community feedback on the proposed projects.

Roles and Responsibilities.

The LPC is expected to:

- Identify existing local events and community meetings where information about the DRI/NYF program can be shared
- Recommend engagement strategies that have been successful in engaging a broad spectrum of the community in the past

Municipal Representatives are expected to:

- Identify existing local events and community meetings where information about the DRI/NYF program can be shared
- Recommend engagement strategies that have been successful in engaging a broad spectrum of the community in the past
- Help with event planning and coordination, as needed

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Lead the planning and coordination of all events
- Develop all the materials needed for each event (e.g., large format display boards, brochures, interactive activities, comment cards, sign-in sheets, etc.)
- Facilitate and staff each event
- Set-up and break-down each event

SECTION 2.8

LOCAL OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Examples of Local Outreach Activities

- Public walking tours of the DRI/NYF area and potential projects
- Pop-ups at community events (e.g., farmer's market, festival)
- Social events like a movie night or restaurant crawl to share and gather information
- Presentations at standing community meetings to share information about the DRI/NYF program and solicit input
- Partnering with local businesses to establish a downtown project information center in a high traffic location
- Collaborating with the local school system to host a workshop with students and faculty



| Geneva Open Storefront
(DRI Round 4)



| Peekskill Pop-Up Event
(DRI Round 4)



| Massena Pop-Up Event
(DRI Round 5)

SECTION 3.0

Downtown Profile and Assessment

In this Section:

SECTION 3.1 Purpose and Schedule

SECTION 3.2 Best Practices

SECTION 3.3 Required Components



SECTION 3.1

Purpose and Schedule

The downtown profile and assessment tells a clear and concise story of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward community — where it is today, how it got there, and where it is going — and provides the logical basis for project recommendations.

Purpose

Working closely with municipal representatives and the State team, the consultant team will develop a downtown profile and assessment for each Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) or NY Forward (NYF) community. The downtown profile and assessment shall consist of a clear, concise, and compelling narrative that articulates the story of the downtown, its relationship to the surrounding region, and its future potential.

The downtown profile and assessment should be a highly visual document that allows the reader to quickly and easily understand why a particular community is prime for revitalization, while also providing the logical basis for project identification and selection. The required components of the downtown profile and assessment are defined in Section 3.3 and include the following topics:

- Description of the study area
- Demographic overview
- Regional and historic context
- Related recent plans and investments
- Physical setting
- Economic context
- Trends, opportunities, and challenges

DRI/NYF Boundary

As part of the DRI/NYF application process, each community clearly identified the boundary of the downtown area where it proposes to focus its planning efforts. These boundaries define concentrated, walkable areas and may range from a corridor to a few blocks of a neighborhood or arts district to the municipality's traditional central business district.

In addition to defining the eligible project area, this boundary also establishes the geographic focus for the downtown profile and assessment. Any changes made to the boundary will impact the data collected and presented in the downtown profile and assessment.

The DRI/NYF boundary will be confirmed or adjusted during Local Planning Committee (LPC) Meeting #1. Slight modifications, for which there is a strong justification, may be made to the boundary during the planning process. However, communities are encouraged to limit boundary adjustments to the early phases of the planning process, as changes to the boundary can have cascading effects on other project deliverables, including the downtown profile and assessment.

SECTION 3.1

PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE

Schedule

The graphic to the right defines key milestones related to the development and refinement of the downtown profile and assessment over the course of the planning process.

- A complete draft of the downtown profile and assessment will be generated by the consultant team during the early months of the planning process.
- As projects are identified and developed, additional analyses (e.g., a housing market analysis) may be required to better understand specific local or regional challenges. The consultant team will conduct these custom analyses and incorporate the findings into the downtown profile and assessment during the project development phase.
- Towards the end of the planning process, consultant teams will revisit and update the downtown profile and assessment to document any additional opportunities and/or challenges uncovered during project development and the planning process as a whole.

The downtown profile and assessment is intended to be a living document throughout the planning process. Although a full draft should be complete prior to the third LPC meeting, updates and refinements will be made throughout the planning process to ensure the downtown profile and assessment truly reflects the unique conditions, needs, and opportunities of each DRI/NYF community.



SECTION 3.2

Best Practices

Developing a Strong Downtown Profile and Assessment

A strong downtown profile and assessment:

- Concisely tells the story of the community by using a combination of maps, diagrams, photographs, and other visuals to help the reader quickly understand the downtown area's context and its potential.
- Provides a strong analytical understanding of trends, opportunities, and challenges and lays the foundation for the development of revitalization strategies.
- Clearly relates all data and analysis back to the community's revitalization efforts (i.e., if there is no clear link between a piece of information and the community's revitalization potential, it's probably not necessary).
- Is an on-the-ground perspective of the community established through site visits and local insights, that provides greater context and understanding than a data and desktop review.
- Provides a logical basis for the recommended projects. Proposed projects should connect to or address some of the trends, opportunities, and challenges presented in the downtown profile and assessment.
- Avoids jargon and is written in a style accessible to the general public.

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The Downtown Profile and Assessment Does Not...

- **Provide a full inventory of all conditions.** Rather, it only highlights the conditions most relevant to achieving a community's downtown revitalization goals.
- **Present information in a vacuum.** Data and other information should be presented as part of a larger narrative that provides insight into the community and its future potential.
- **Limit data and analysis to the DRI/NYF area.** While the DRI/NYF area provides the geographic focus for the downtown profile and assessment, regional trends, transportation connections, destinations, and anchor employers/institutions should be considered. The DRI/NYF area does not exist in isolation. Regional connections critical to the downtown's revitalization should be clearly identified and described.

SECTION 3.2

I Town of Seneca Falls (DRI Round 4)



SECTION 3.3

Required Components

Overview

The downtown profile and assessment should be customized to each DRI/NYF community and organized in a way that clearly and effectively tells the story of each downtown area, including its strengths, challenges, and future potential. The downtown profile and assessment should be concise and targeted, and all information presented needs to clearly relate to the downtown's revitalization efforts.

The downtown profile and assessment is also expected to be a well-integrated mix of photographs, infographics, maps, diagrams, and narrative. All visuals should support the text and help the reader quickly distill key findings.

Minimum Requirements

At a minimum, each downtown profile and assessment must address the topics described below.

Study Area/Boundary Description

This section provides an overview of the DRI/NYF boundary, which serves as the primary study area for the downtown profile and assessment. In addition to describing the study area's general character, this section also highlights the regional context and significant features, such as roadways, landmarks, and/or environmental features.

Demographic Overview

This section provides a snapshot of the community's socio-demographic characteristics, including comparisons between the study area, the municipality, and potentially the larger region (e.g., county). This section may include relevant data such as:

- Population/population trends
- Age
- Income
- Employment
- Poverty (may also include the delineation of Potential Environmental Justice and/or Disadvantaged Communities)
- Educational attainment
- Household tenure
- Other pertinent topics

Regional and Historic Context

This section provides a brief overview of the community's historical context — including defining events and how it has changed over time — the features and services that make it unique, and its relationship to the surrounding region and State as a whole. This section will also clearly identify regional connections that are critical to sustaining a high quality of life in the downtown area (e.g., access to airports and other transportation hubs, employment centers, healthcare, etc.).

SECTION 3.3

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

I Representative Demographic Overview Infographic from the Norwich DRI Downtown Profile and Assessment (DRI Round 5)

*DRI Area
At A Glance*

406

residents

39

median age

30%

poverty
rate

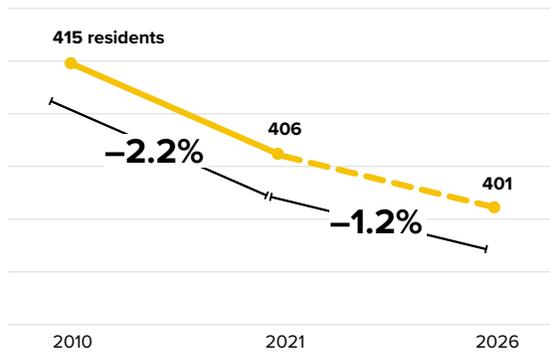
35%

high school
education only

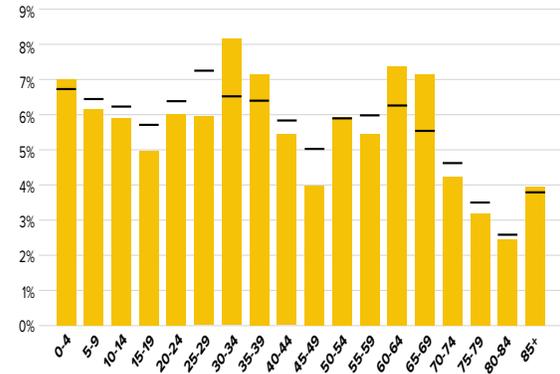
75%

of households
are renters

Population Trends



Percent of Population, By Age



Median Household Income

\$75,042

New York State

\$52,062

Chenango County

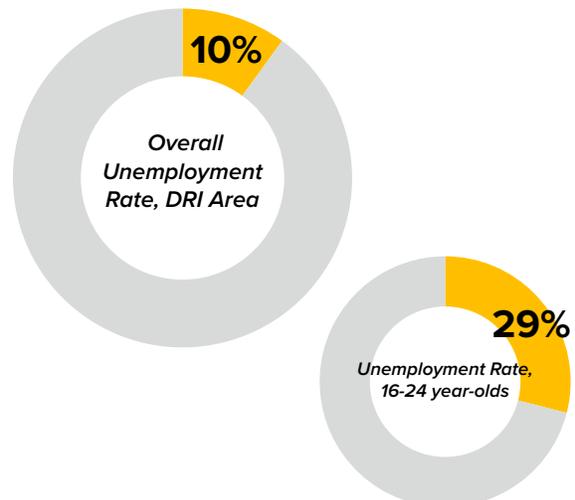
\$41,598

City of Norwich

\$24,547

DRI Area

\$0



SECTION 3.3

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Recent Plans and Investment

This section provides a concise narrative of major initiatives undertaken within or adjacent to the DRI/NYF boundary that directly support the revitalization of the study area, such as comprehensive plans, corridor studies, small area plans, Brownfield Opportunity Area and Local Waterfront Revitalization plans, parks and open space plans, and economic development initiatives. Key findings and recommendations related to the area's downtown revitalization efforts should be summarized for each plan and initiative.

This section should also describe recent public and private investments made within or adjacent to the DRI/NYF area that directly advance the downtown's revitalization. The attributes of each investment (e.g., project name and brief description, amount, funding source) will be organized in a table, and if possible shown on a map.

I Representative Recent Private Investment Map from the Chinatown DRI Downtown Profile and Assessment (DRI Round 5)



SECTION 3.3

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Alignment with REDC Strategies

A brief description of the relevant REDC strategic goals and investments should be provided in the downtown profile and assessment. Other REDC plans and initiatives relevant to the community's revitalization should also be referenced. This section may be stand-alone or integrated with the preceding section focused on highlighting recent relevant plans and investments. The connection between each REDC strategic goal and the DRI/NYF community's revitalization should be clearly articulated.

- Existing land use
- Zoning and/or design standards
- Infrastructure systems (e.g., broadband, water supply and sewer infrastructure and capacity, energy)
- Transportation networks (e.g., street hierarchies, pedestrian circulation, parking, public transit, rail, active multi-modal trails)
- Public spaces (e.g., parks, plaza, open spaces)
- Historic, cultural, and artistic assets

Physical Setting

This section is intended to give the reader a clear sense of the study area by describing its physical and regulatory context. Maps, diagrams, photographs, and other visuals should be thoughtfully integrated into this section to clearly illustrate concepts and findings described in the narrative.

The topics addressed in this section should be tailored to the community and will therefore vary between each DRI/NYF community. Only topics with the greatest relevance and significance to the study area and its revitalization should be addressed. Potential topics include:

- Environmental context (e.g., topography, flood hazard areas, unique habitats)
- Resilience (e.g., relevant ordinances and/or plans, lessons learned from flood vulnerability, heat vulnerability)
- Built environment (e.g., architectural style, streetscape character and connectivity, transit-oriented development, building scale, block sizes)
- Vacant and underutilized sites

Economic Trends and Opportunities

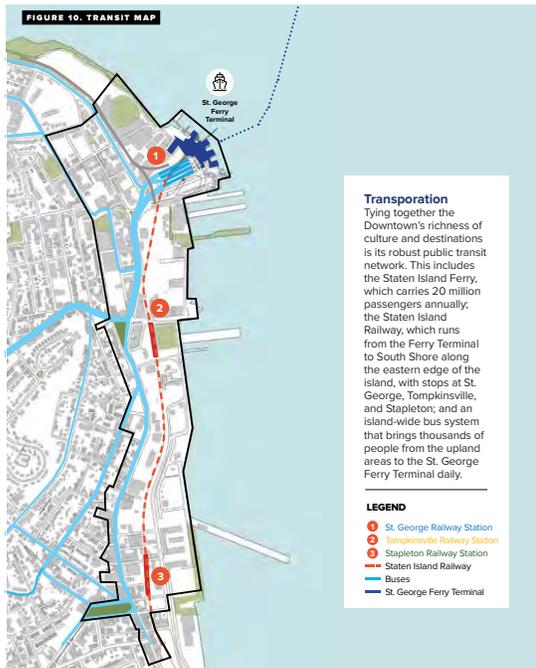
The downtown profile and assessment must include a section that succinctly characterizes economic trends and opportunities for the region, municipality, trade catchment area, and the downtown. This economic overview should be verified with data and insights gathered from local stakeholders and development and real estate professionals. This section should also clearly identify local assets, growth opportunities, constraints, and strategies for spurring local economic development. Focused market analyses related to the identified opportunities and constraints may be necessary, especially if more detailed information is needed to understand a specific sector (e.g., housing, tourism, office, commercial, etc.) and how it intersects with downtown revitalization. More specific analyses completed in support of proposed projects may also be summarized here.

Key findings from this section, particularly those with a direct connection to a community's revitalization, should also be integrated in the following section, "Synthesis of Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities."

SECTION 3.3

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

I Representative Map Series Describing the Physical Setting of Staten Island's DRI Area (DRI Round 4)



SECTION 3.3

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Synthesis of Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities

The downtown profile and assessment should conclude with a substantial synthesis of the information presented in the preceding sections and include additional details that convey the community's trends, challenges, and opportunities. This synthesis should seamlessly weave together data and information to provide a clear image of the downtown's trends, challenges, and opportunities and lay the foundation for the development of revitalization strategies and the identification of proposed projects.



Using the Downtown Profile and Assessment to Inform Project Recommendations

The downtown profile and assessment should be clearly related to a downtown's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies and recommended projects. For example, in the Watkins Glen SIP (Round 2), the downtown profile and assessment identified long-term housing availability as a critical issue. It provided a summary of existing housing types, recent housing assessments and developments, and summarized a real estate market analysis that delved into residential inventory, vacancies, and rents. This information helped shape the community's revitalization strategies and recommended projects that focused on providing high-quality, year-round housing for current and future residents.

SECTION 4.0

Vision, Goals, and Revitalization Strategies

In this Section:

SECTION 4.1 Purpose and Schedule

SECTION 4.2 Required Components

VISIONING WOMEN

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE AUBURN TODAY?

CHANGING

DIVERSE

BOUNTY

DYNAMIC

OPEN

X 4 = 4

Vibrant

Complex

energetic

thriving

resilient



SECTION 4.1

Purpose and Schedule

The community's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies are intended to be ambitious as well as illustrative of the future that can be achieved through the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward program and subsequent investment. Each community's vision, goals, and strategies should be informed by robust community engagement, respond to the needs and opportunities identified in the downtown profile and assessment, and guide decision-making related to future development and investment in the community.

Purpose

As part of the DRI/NYF application, communities were required to provide a brief statement of their vision for downtown revitalization. Early in the planning process, the Local Planning Committee (LPC) will review the initial vision and make modifications to best reflect the unique characteristics of the community and incorporate public feedback gathered during [Public Workshop #1](#), [Stakeholder Meetings](#), and other forms of [local engagement](#).

In support of the community's vision and goals, revitalization strategies will also be established. Goals should be detailed, attainable, and action-oriented, and they should be paired with measurable strategies that will guide the implementation of the DRI/NYF program. Each community's vision statement and supporting goals and strategies should incorporate, as appropriate, the fundamental goals of the DRI/NYF program which can be found in [Section 1.2: Introduction to the DRI and NYF Programs](#) of this guidebook.



Vision, Goals, and Revitalization Strategies Defined

VISION

What will the community look like in 5–7 years? The vision statement provides a guiding framework for the DRI/NYF community's Strategic Investment Plan and decision-making regarding future development and investment in the community.

GOALS

How will the community attain its vision? Goals are clear statements of what needs to be accomplished to move towards the DRI/NYF vision.

REVITALIZATION STRATEGIES

What steps must be taken to achieve a specific goal? Strategies are discrete, measurable actions required to achieve a goal.

SECTION 4.1

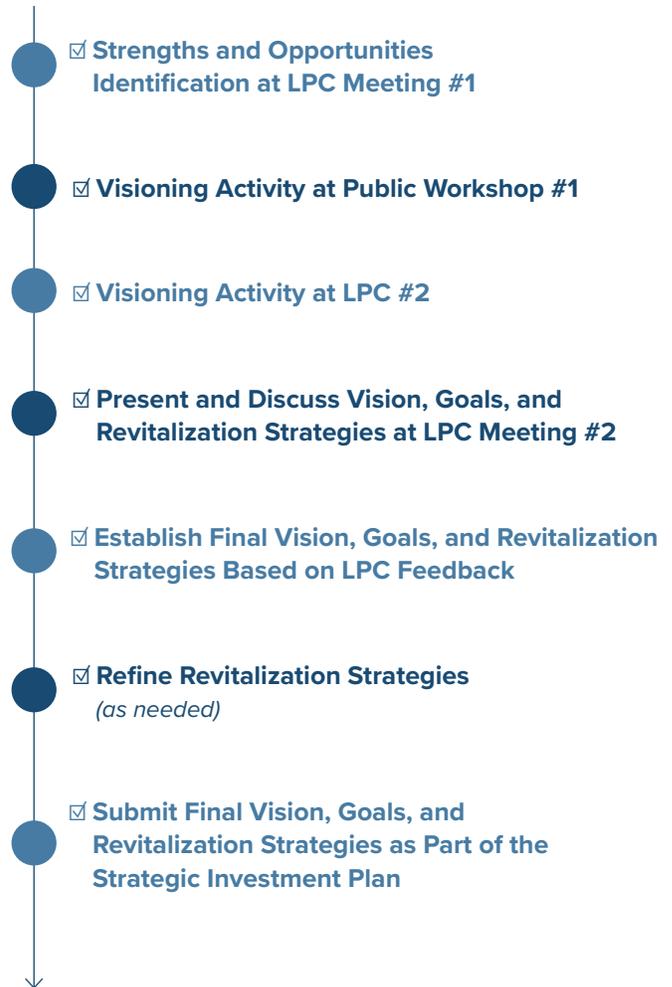
PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE

Schedule

The graphic to the right defines key milestones related to the development and refinement of the community's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies over the course of the planning process.

- The identification of strengths, opportunities, and challenges and the results from visioning exercises from the first two LPC meetings and the first public workshop will help refine the vision statement originally presented in the community's DRI/NYF application.
- Based on LPC and public feedback and the findings from the downtown profile and assessment, goals supporting the vision statement and corresponding strategies will be developed following the visioning activities.
- The refined vision, goals, and strategies should be presented and discussed at LPC Meeting #3.
- Minor adjustments to the strategies may be made during the project development phase of the process to better reflect the proposed projects.

The community's vision, goals, and strategies play an important role in guiding project identification, development, and evaluation. Therefore, each community's vision, goals, and strategies should be near-final by LPC Meeting #3, which is when the planning process pivots to focus on project development and evaluation.



SECTION 4.2

Required Components

Overview

As previously noted, the vision, goals, and revitalization strategies are intended to reflect each community's unique local conditions and provide a strong framework for long-term revitalization. Specifically, the vision, goals, and strategies should directly respond to the needs, opportunities, and challenges synthesized in the downtown profile and assessment and provide the evaluative framework for assessing proposed projects under consideration for DRI/NYF funding.

In addition, the vision, goals, and strategies will be critical during the latter half of the planning process as they guide the identification, evaluation, and selection of proposed projects.

Minimum Requirements

The vision, goals, and strategies must be clearly presented in the SIP, with general guidance and representative examples provided on the following pages.

Vision

The consultant team will support the LPC in reviewing and refining the vision statement included in the community's DRI/NYF application.

The vision statement should:

- Be future-focused and clearly define how the community would like to see itself in the next five to seven years;
- Be inspiring, aspirational, and ambitious for long-term revitalization;
- Be reflective of the unique nature of the DRI/NYF community and the catalytic impacts DRI/NYF funding will have on the community's downtown;
- Incorporate a diversity of voices through terms, ideas, and statements identified through public engagement;
- Be concise, accessible to all readers, and avoid jargon;
- Avoid metrics;
- Reflect consensus across community sectors;
- Be general enough not to be affected by short term changes; and
- Be locally-specific and not easily transferable to another community.

The next page is an example of a strong vision statement from Newark DRI Round 5.

SECTION 4.2

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

I Vision Statement from the Newark DRI Vision, Goals, and Strategies (DRI Round 5)

Example of a Strong Vision Statement

"Downtown Newark and the Erie Canal District will be a cultural and commercial center to the Finger Lakes region, serving regional residents, workers, and guests with unique urban vibrancy, blending downtown with the beauty of the surrounding rural landscape and the Erie Canal. As the heartbeat of a lively, world-class Village, downtown serves as a destination for those seeking to live in a unique setting, shop, and work in a vibrant commercial center, and visit a community reflective and central to all that the Finger Lakes has to offer."



Why this is a Strong Vision Statement

- Future-focused
- Context-specific (e.g., Erie Canal, Finger Lakes)
- Avoids jargon / words not meaningful to the DRI area

SECTION 4.2 REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Goals

In support of the vision statement and with community feedback, the consultant team will develop a series of goals designed to achieve the community’s vision for downtown revitalization. The consultant team will work closely with the LPC to develop and refine these goals; the goals must be responsive to public feedback received throughout the planning process.

The goals of the DRI/NYF community should be:

- Realistic;
- Clear and well-defined; and
- Aligned with and supportive of the community’s vision.

Revitalization Strategies

Based on the vision and goals, findings from the downtown profile and assessment, and public feedback, the consultant teams shall guide the LPC in the development of creative and ambitious strategies to direct future development and investment in the downtown area. Each goal should be paired with several action-oriented strategies that are locally specific.

The revitalization strategies should:

- Be actionable statements that are specific and have local context;
- Be derived from the opportunities and challenges identified in the downtown profile;
- Relate to the proposed DRI/NYF projects;
- Clearly and concisely direct a type of action to help meet a specific goal; and
- Guide the community on how to continue revitalization beyond DRI/NYF projects.



What to Avoid

The following should be avoided during the development of the community’s vision, goals, and revitalization strategies:

- Restating a description of the community today
- Developing unattainable actions, especially those not tied to the DRI/NYF area
- Using vague language that could relate to anywhere

SECTION 4.2 REQUIRED COMPONENTS

I Example of Strong Goals and Revitalization Strategies from the Syracuse DRI (Round 5)

The goals are very specific and the strategies clearly state how to achieve the goals.

Goal | Improve the vibrancy of commercial and residential real estate in the Southwest Gateway.

- ✓ Redevelop properties to maximize utilization of vacant or outdated structures and create additional commercial activity throughout the Southwest Gateway.
- ✓ Invest in new development, particularly infill development, to support a diverse array of uses that would help residents (e.g., pharmacies, wellness facilities) and attract people from outside the areas (e.g., food and music venues).
- ✓ Support facade improvements to buildings along the Southwest Gateway's primary commercial corridors.

Goal | Help small business retain and attract new customers.

- ✓ Invest in small mom and pop businesses eager to upgrade their buildings / facades that contribute to the vibrancy of the district.
- ✓ Promote small businesses in the Southwest Gateway, helping customers to identify and visit related businesses in the area.

Goal | Attract a diverse community to the Southwest Gateway.

- ✓ Create additional housing across the income spectrum, particularly affordable units, to attract new residents and improve the housing stock.
- ✓ Develop and execute a marketing plan for the Southwest Gateway to engage new investors, businesses, potential residents, and visitors.
- ✓ Support public art murals along West Onondaga Street and other key locations in the Southwest Gateway.
- ✓ Support of spectrum of small businesses that vary in the services they offer and the people they serve.

Goal | Cultivate a walkable, vibrant streetscape that is environmentally-friendly and connected to Armory Square

- ✓ Encourage pedestrian activity by adding lighting and improving streetscapes, particularly at crosswalks.
- ✓ Increase transit mobility by adding infrastructure improvements that support the use of bikes, scooters, and electric vehicles.

Goal | Enhance the quality of life in the Southwest Gateway.

- ✓ Improve public spaces and rights-of-way along business corridors to increase the area's attractiveness and provide additional quality of life amenities for residents, employees, and visitors.
- ✓ Encourage the frequent use of parks through improved infrastructure and additional activities.
- ✓ Support the development of outdoor vendor spaces.



SECTION 5.0

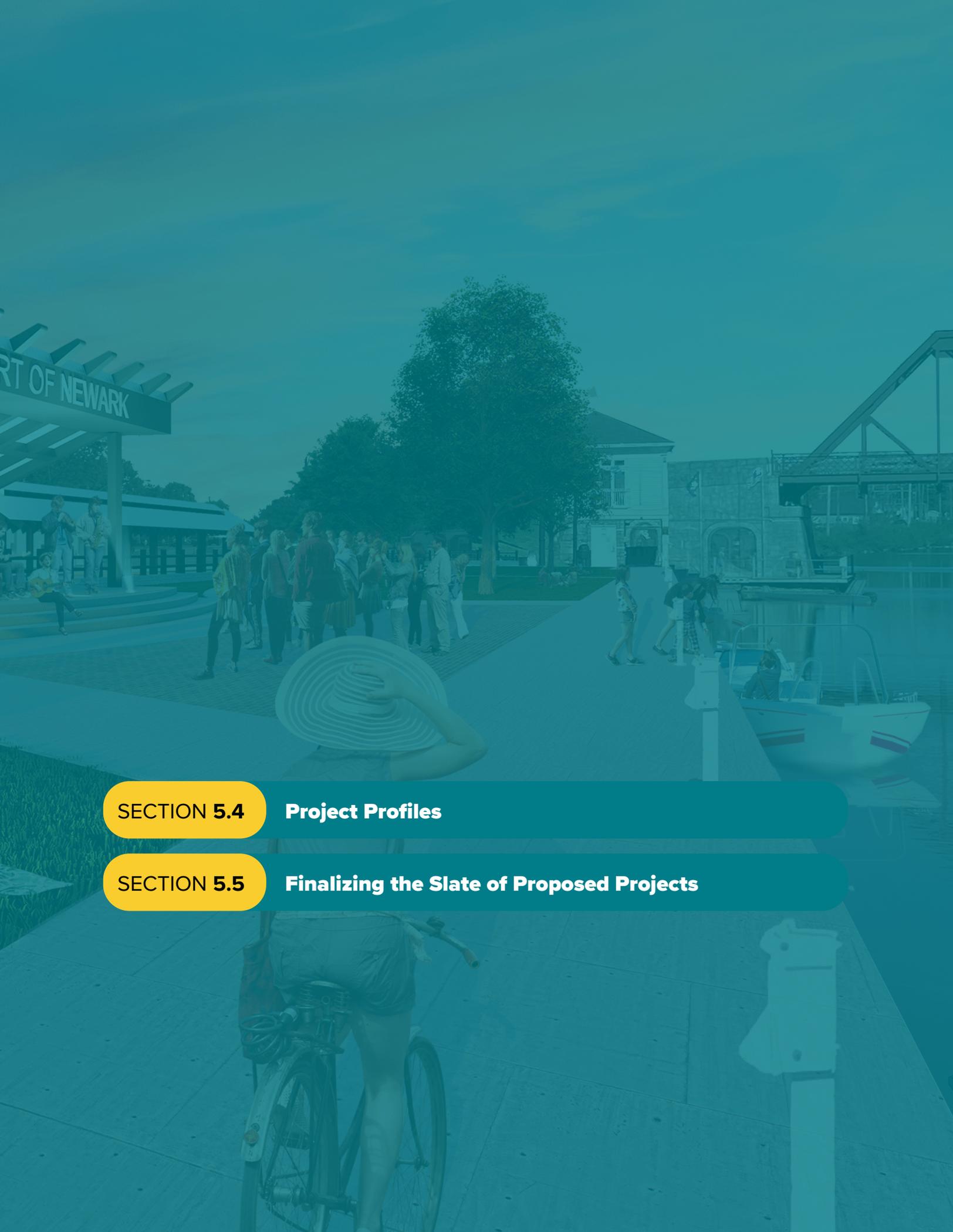
Project Development

In this Section:

SECTION 5.1 Purpose and Schedule

SECTION 5.2 Project Types and Requirements

SECTION 5.3 Project Development



SECTION 5.4

Project Profiles

SECTION 5.5

Finalizing the Slate of Proposed Projects

SECTION 5.1

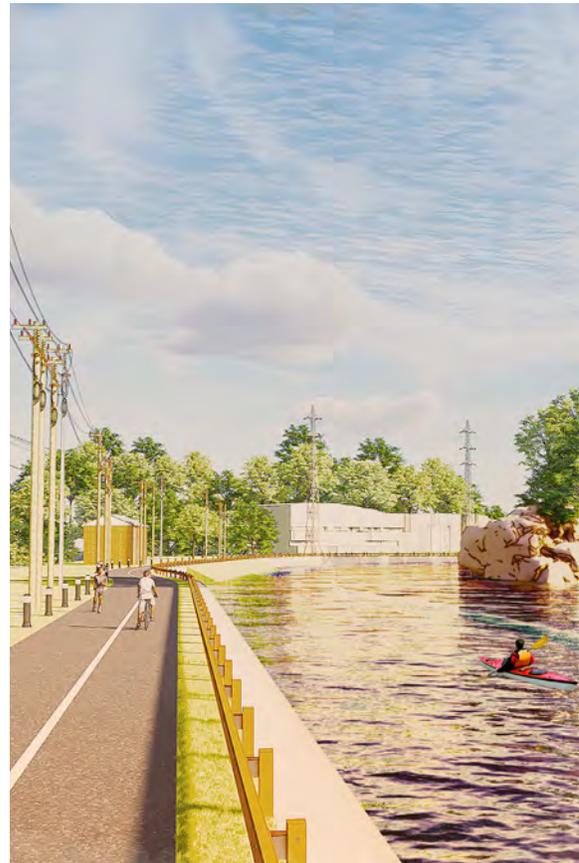
Purpose and Schedule

Proposed projects seeking Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward funding should catalyze future downtown revitalization, further the community's vision and goals, and benefit a growing downtown.

Purpose

As part of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), communities should identify transformative projects that may be realized with an investment of Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) or NY Forward (NYF) funds. It is expected DRI/ NYF funds will be used for capital projects that will transform the physical environment of the downtown in ways that will benefit current residents and future generations. However, certain non-capital projects that may lead to capital investment will also be considered to the extent that they will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown and are consistent with the community's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies.

Project identification, development, and evaluation by the Local Planning Committee comprises a substantial portion of the planning process. The project development phase is fast-paced and collaborative; it requires that project sponsors, the consultant team, and the Local Planning Committee (LPC) be engaged in a process that will result in a slate of recommended projects, which will help the community progress toward its vision of a revitalized downtown.



Example of a Proposed Project Rendering
(Little Falls Round 5)

SECTION 5.1

PURPOSE AND SCHEDULE

Schedule

The graphic to the right identifies key milestones related to the identification, development, and refinement of proposed projects over the course of the planning process.

- Public engagement and the Open Call for Projects during the early months of the planning process provide the opportunity to submit proposed projects for the LPC's consideration.
- Projects received in the early months of the process will be presented at LPC Meeting #3. After LPC Meeting #3, the consultant team will work with project sponsors, as needed, to continue project development.
- At LPC Meeting #3, the LPC will begin discussing and refining the list of proposed projects. As projects continue to develop, the LPC will gradually narrow the list of proposed projects in the following LPC meetings.
- Following LPC Meeting #3, consultant teams will work closely with project sponsors and the LPC to develop projects, conduct site visits, and identify information needs. During this period, the LPC will also be discussing and evaluating projects as they narrow the list into a final slate of projects.
- At the final LPC Meeting, a final slate of proposed projects will be identified for inclusion in the SIP. Project profiles may be further refined for inclusion in the SIP as it is compiled.



SECTION 5.2

Project Types and Requirements

Overview

This planning process is designed to encourage creative and innovative approaches to downtown revitalization, resulting in a list of projects, including projects that were contemplated in the community's DRI/NYF application and others that arose during the process. DRI and NYF fund a wide variety of capital projects, which generally fall into the following categories under Eligible Project Types.

Eligible Project Types

- **New Development and/or Rehabilitation of Existing Downtown Buildings.** Projects in this category may include the development or redevelopment of real property for mixed-use, commercial, residential, not-for-profit, or public uses. All projects should be capital investments or should lead to capital investments. They should have a visible and functional impact on the downtown, serving as catalytic or transformative projects that will provide employment opportunities, housing choices, and/or services for the community. Proposals to construct or rehabilitate parking facilities will only be considered if they directly support new development in the downtown area.

- **Public Improvement Projects.** These may include projects such as streetscape and transportation improvements, recreational trails, wayfinding signage, new and upgraded parks, plazas, public art, green infrastructure, and other public realm projects that will contribute to the revitalization of the downtown.



Example of a Completed Park Project
(Watkins Glen Round 2)

SECTION 5.2

PROJECT TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS

- **Small Project Fund.** A locally managed matching small project fund may be proposed to undertake a range of smaller downtown projects such as facade enhancements, building renovation improvements to commercial or mixed-use spaces, business assistance, or public art. Funds are capped at \$600,000 for DRI communities and \$300,000 for NYF communities.
- **Branding and Marketing.** Examples include downtown branding and marketing projects that may target residents, investors, developers, tourists, and/or visitors. The costs eligible under this category must be one-time expenses, such as those to develop materials and signage. Ongoing operational costs, such as funding a downtown manager or maintaining a website, are not eligible for DRI/NYF funding.



Ineligible Activities

There are few restrictions on the use of DRI/NYF funds other than the requirement that proposed projects are largely capital in nature, can be implemented quickly, and as a whole, have a transformational impact on the downtown. However, a few specific activities have been identified as ineligible for DRI/NYF funds and should not be included in projects proposed for DRI/NYF funding. These ineligible activities include:

- **Standalone planning activities.** Following the preparation of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP), all DRI/NYF funds must be used for projects that directly implement the plan.
- **Operations and maintenance.** DRI/NYF funds cannot be used for ongoing or routine expenses, such as staff salaries and wages, rent, utilities, and property upkeep.
- **Pre-award costs.** Reimbursement for costs incurred before the completion of the SIP and the announcement of funding awards is not permitted.
- **Property acquisition.** The cost of property acquisition can be included in the overall project budget, but the acquisition must be funded by another funding source.
- **Training and other program expenses.** The DRI and NYF programs are a one-time infusion of funds and cannot be used to cover continuous costs, such as training costs and expenses related to existing programs.

SECTION 5.2

PROJECT TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS

Project Requirements

The DRI/NYF programs are designed to fund transformational projects that have the potential to create an immediate, positive effect on a community's downtown. Projects recommended for DRI/NYF funding in the SIP should meet the following requirements:

- **Timing.** Projects must be able to break ground within two years or sooner of receiving DRI/NYF funding.
- **Project Size and Scale.** Projects must be large enough to be truly transformative for the downtown area.
- **Project Sponsors.** Every project must have an identified project sponsor. Sponsors may be public, not-for-profit, or private entities with the capacity and legal authority to undertake the proposed project.
- **Financing.** Projects should have financing commitments largely secured or be able to demonstrate a clear path to securing sufficient financing. This financing, combined with DRI/NYF funding, should enable the sponsor to undertake the project expeditiously.
- **Matching and Leverage.** New York communities are diverse. To meet the opportunities and challenges throughout the State, there are no programmatic minimum match requirements for the DRI or NYF with the exception of a small project fund. However, the LPC may impose match requirements as part of the planning process. For a small project fund, matching requirements must be no less than 25% of the total cost per project.
- **Site Control.** The project sponsor must have site control or be in the process of acquiring site control. If the project sponsor is leasing or renting the proposed project site, the property owner must agree to the proposed project in writing.
- **Building Decarbonization.** For DRI/NYF communities, all public, private, and not-for-profit projects that meet the criteria for new construction, substantial renovation, or a building addition shall include decarbonization techniques. Each of these projects will select a method demonstrating that the project satisfies the program decarbonization requirements, called the compliance path. Technical assistance regarding decarbonization strategies will be provided to project sponsors by NYSERDA and their consultants.
- The following projects are required to comply with the decarbonization standards:
 - New construction projects > 5,000 SF
 - Building addition projects > 5,000 SF
 - Substantial renovation projects > 5,000 SF and other renovation criteria



Non-DRI/NYF Leverage

It is strongly encouraged that all projects, especially private projects, leverage non-DRI or NYF funds. DRI and NYF project funds are best used to fill funding gaps and facilitate other investment.

SECTION 5.2

PROJECT TYPES AND REQUIREMENTS



- Projects meeting these criteria are required to follow one of the compliance pathways listed below:
 - Meet the New York State Stretch Energy Code, regardless of local adoption of the code
 - Obtain an Energy Star score of 90 or better using EPA’s Target Finder Calculator
 - Obtain a building or project certification from an approved third-party organization, such as Energy Star, LEED, etc.
- Because decarbonization improves building performance and energy efficiency and reduces operating costs, projects are encouraged to implement decarbonization techniques even if they do not meet the threshold criteria for new construction, substantial renovation, or building addition projects. These projects will also receive the same technical assistance for decarbonization as provided to those DRI/NYF projects that are required to comply.

Building Decarbonization

As New York strives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonizing buildings is a key component of the state’s strategy. Decarbonizing buildings occurs by making equipment and systems in new construction and existing buildings more energy efficient and powered by emissions-free sources. The DRI and NYF programs will support this effort by suggesting decarbonization strategies for individual buildings as well as requiring that certain DRI/NYF building projects meet decarbonization standards.

Benefits of Building Decarbonization

- Promotes healthier and safer buildings with improved indoor air quality, which improves overall health and enhances cognitive functioning
- Reduces utility bills by making buildings more energy efficient
- Increases resilience of buildings by using techniques to increase energy efficiency and generate and store power locally.
- Improves community health by improving outdoor air quality through reduced carbon emissions
- Supports local job creation through the design and installation of energy-efficiency measures during new building construction or renovation of existing buildings
- Helps achieve the State’s goals for carbon emissions reduction in accordance with the New York Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.

SECTION 5.3

Project Development

Overview

Given the diverse ways that project proposals are identified as described in [Section 2.4: Project Identification](#), projects arrive to the process in different stages of development ranging from ideas to fully-formed proposals with clear budgets and design concepts. The project development portion of the DRI/NYF planning process is designed to first assist project sponsors with determining if the project is viable for DRI/NYF funding. Project viability can be affected by various factors, including but not limited to ineligibility, or lack of project sponsor, financing, site control, or readiness.

If a project is viable, this process shifts to the consultant team working with project sponsors to refine a project so the project can meet State standards and be ready for implementation if selected for inclusion in the final slate of projects. During this portion of the process and guided by the requirements listed in [Section 5.4: Project Profiles](#), project sponsors and the consultant team work together to develop budgets, project justifications, and concept designs, among other project components.

While the consultant team may provide significant technical support to project sponsors (e.g., rendering development, planning level cost estimates, development of project profiles, etc.), it is critical that project sponsors communicate frequently with the consultant team and provide necessary project information in a timely manner. The consultant teams, in close coordination with the State team, will also be responsible for helping project sponsors understand the requirements of the DRI/NYF grant funds, which are structured as reimbursable grants.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Coordinate, schedule, and facilitate meetings with all project sponsors
- Conduct a site visit with each viable project sponsor at the proposed project site
- Conduct ongoing meetings, as needed, to develop and refine proposed projects
- Answer questions and facilitate ongoing meetings, as needed, to discuss the DRI/NYF program, eligible project activities, and a project sponsor's capacity to implement the proposed project and ensure its long-term success
- Coordinate NYSERDA technical assistance, as needed, based on the proposed project type and scope
- Develop project profiles, including conceptual renderings and cost estimates

Project Sponsors are expected to:

- Clearly define the project's purpose and scope and how it relates to the community's vision, goals, and strategies
- Work closely with the consultant team to provide the necessary information to support the development of the project profile, including a detailed scope of work, cost estimates, and renderings
- Provide information in a timely manner to enable review and evaluation by the LPC

SECTION 5.3

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



What Makes a Project Idea into a Viable Project?

- Eligible project activities
- A project sponsor that has the legal authority and capacity to implement the project
- Sufficient financing
- Site control or demonstrated ability to acquire the property or receive permission to implement a project
- Readiness and capacity to implement the project within two years of DRI/ NYF funding

| Site Visit with Project Sponsor (Auburn Round 3)

SECTION 5.4

Project Profiles

Overview

The project profile is a description of the proposed project that includes all relevant information needed to evaluate the project in the context of downtown revitalization. The profile is the documentation of the project development and refinement process. The project profiles, which will be developed for each proposed project, are the primary content generated during the planning process.

Each project profile should be able to stand on its own and should contain all the information needed to evaluate it in the context of the community's downtown revitalization effort. The content of each project profile is expected to evolve throughout the planning process, with the final project profiles providing the level of detail needed to move quickly from evaluation to funding and, if awarded, to implementation. Each SIP should include project profiles for all projects that would advance the community's vision for downtown revitalization.

Roles and Responsibilities

The LPC is expected to:

- Review project profiles as they are made available and come to each LPC meeting prepared to discuss the proposed projects
- Identify additional information and/or desired project elements needed to keep the project in consideration for DRI/NYF funding

Project Sponsors are expected to:

- Work closely with the consultant team to provide necessary information in a timely manner to support the consultant team's development of the project profile

The Consultant Team is expected to:

- Draft and finalize all content, renderings, photographs, and/or graphics required for the project profiles
- Work closely with project sponsors and the LPC to obtain and develop the necessary information and data to support the development of the project profiles

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

Project Profile Contents

Each project profile is required to address the following topics. Below are instructions for how to address that topic for each project as well as examples of how that topic could be successfully covered in a project profile.

1. Project Title

The project title must begin with an action-oriented statement and should succinctly describe the “what” and “where.” Project titles must:

- Begin with an action (Transform, Expand, Establish, Renovate, Build, Create, etc.)
- Name the outcome if applicable (Public Plaza, Job Training Center, Small Project Fund, Mixed-Use, Housing)
- Name the location if applicable (Historic Edwards Building, Historic Cannon Building, Long-Vacant Historic Buildings, Corner of Main & Clinton, 78 Bridge Street)

2. DRI/NYF Funding Request and Total Project Cost

Each project profile must state the requested amount to be paid by DRI/NYF funds, the total project cost, and the percentage of total costs requested. It is expected that the DRI/NYF funding request for private projects will represent just a component of the overall project budget. The total project cost should reflect costs paid for by DRI/NYF funds, as well as private equity or financing, tax credits, or other public funding or financing. Those sources of additional funds should be listed in the project budget.

Examples

- *Construct Mixed-Use Development on West Water Street*
- *Transform City Centre into an Indoor Market and Performance Space*
- *Renovate 13-15 Central Avenue to Create New Office Space*

Example

Total DRI Funds Requested: \$2,500,000

Total Project Cost: \$6,500,000

% of Total Project Cost: 40%

SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

3. Project Description

A complete but concise description of the project that indicates the location, describes what will be planned, designed, and constructed, and describes the expected outcome(s) is required. This description should include the following, if applicable:

- A description of the proposed use (e.g., commercial, industrial, residential, public improvement, or mixed-use) and the specific proposed improvements. For example, a description of a residential or mixed-use development may include information about the number of units, building stories, commercial square footage, housing class (e.g., affordable, market-rate, workforce housing), or commercial tenants (if identified). A description of a park improvement may include details about specific improvements such as new seating areas, lighting, landscaping, path construction, etc.
- The current use and condition of the property and the size of the area impacted by the project, such as number of square feet per floor and number of building stories.
- A description of any work or planning done previously on the proposed project.
- A description of how the project advances the project selection criteria by identifying:
 - The catalytic or transformative nature of the project;
 - Implementation actions needed;
 - Project challenges or obstacles;
 - Maintenance or management arrangements.
- A discussion of the population served, particularly for public improvement projects.
- For a small project fund, a description of the types of projects that will be funded must be included. To maximize the competitiveness of this category, proposals for a fund should identify potential projects to demonstrate the demand for the proposed fund. Eligible activities, activity funding limits, private equity requirements, and other requirements unique to the DRI/ NYF should be included. If a small project fund program is proposed, indicate whether it is for the recapitalization of an existing program, or for a new program.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

4. Project Location/Address

Each project profile must indicate the location of the project and its physical extent, including the address if available with a location map. For small project funds, as well as branding and marketing projects, identify the project target area and provide a geographical representation of the project limits.

Example



SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

5. Project Sponsor

The project sponsor that will implement the project shall be identified. A project sponsor must be a legal entity; it cannot be an individual. The entity should have the legal authority to execute a contract with the State for any awarded funds as well as undertake and oversee the project. For small project funds, an entity must be identified who will manage the fund and contract with the State.

6. Property Ownership

This section must identify the current ownership of the property on which the project will be located. If the project requires the acquisition of real property, describe the need for property acquisition and its status. If the project sponsor is not the property owner, this section should describe the sponsor's rights to the property or how the sponsor will obtain permission to carry out the proposed project.

Property acquisition as a stand-alone project, without a committed redevelopment activity, is not eligible for DRI/NYF funds. While property acquisition may be part of a project, the cost of acquisition is not eligible for DRI/NYF funds. Project Sponsor and Property Ownership may be combined into one section in the Project Profile.

Examples

Example of Same Owners and Sponsors

The City is the property owner and project sponsor for the implementation of streetscape improvements on proposed neighborhood side streets.

Examples of Different Owners and Sponsors

- *The project sponsor is Artists Group, a local arts organization that fosters community through the arts. The property owner of the waterfront park and trail is the Village. The Village is fully supportive of this project and will develop a maintenance agreement with the project sponsor for the proposed sculpture installation.*
- *The current owner is King Development Corporation. ABC Realty, LLC, which will be the new property owner and project sponsor, executed a purchase agreement for the property, dated May 17, 2018. The agreement is contingent upon ABC Realty obtaining a zoning change to permit the proposed use.*

Example of Owners and Sponsors of Funds

The City Department of Neighborhood and Business Development will administer the Fund. All individuals, entities, or companies receiving funding will be the principal owner of the property or have an agreement with the principal owner to make alterations to the subject property.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

7. Capacity

This section shall describe the capacity of the project sponsor to implement and sustain the proposed project and include reference to any other proposed DRI/NYF projects in which the project sponsor is involved. This section should describe the sponsor's experience with developing and sustaining similar projects, the sponsor's experience with state or federal funding programs, and how this project, particularly if a public improvement project, will be maintained after project completion. For small project funds, information about the entity that will implement the fund, the entity's experience, its organizational structure, and how the fund will be managed should be included.

Examples

- The Village will be overseeing the implementation of the proposed project with the assistance of contracted professional planning, engineering, and construction firms. The planning and engineering firms will assist with the design of the project. The Village will subsequently release an RFP for contracting services to construct the approved design. With the assistance of these firms, the Village has implemented many public improvement projects, including streetscapes and park improvements, such as the recently added fitness center at the outdoor recreation area. Many of these public improvement projects were subsidized with state and/or federal funds, including CDBG, NYSDOT, and DEC, and were successfully managed by the Village. The Village intends to provide for future maintenance costs of the project in subsequent budgets.*

- The Youth & Family Center will be responsible for the implementation of the project. Founded in 1910, the Youth & Family Center is a longstanding 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that promotes youth and family development, healthy lifestyles, and social responsibility. The Center has extensive grant management experience including the management of millions of dollars in grants from the following organizations: Food Bank, United Way, County Youth Bureau, Office of Children and Family Services, ABC Foundation, and City School District, among others.*

The Center currently provides numerous services to the community, including a food pantry, thrift store, childcare, and technology access. This project will help the Center expand its services and better meet the needs of the local population. To further its service offerings, the Center is collaborating with local and regional non-profits, with a focus on bringing organizations together to identify and participate in funding opportunities, address complex community needs with localized coordination, strengthen service quality and performance, maximize back office and administrative cost efficiencies and expand services through joint programming. This partnership will help the sponsor expand and maintain high-quality services at the facility and bring in expertise and resources to implement and manage the project.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

8. Project Partners

A list of the key public, not-for-profit, and private entities or organizations needed to implement the projects (e.g., funding partners, operational partners) shall be identified. This does not include entities that are part of the project development team (e.g., architects, engineers, etc.). The role of each partner should be briefly described.

Example

The key project partners include the Artists Group, the Art Center, and the Downtown Business Improvement District. The Art Center will act as the curator for the project and will manage, in partnership with the Artists Group, artist selection, project schedule, and acquisition of materials and equipment. The Artists Group will oversee the execution of artist contracts and the Arts Center will oversee the implementation of associated marketing and promotional activities. The Downtown BID will assist with relations between building owners and support the marketing and promotion of the mural projects. All project partners will collaborate to schedule, market, and facilitate public art walking tours that include stops at retail and restaurant partners and generate revenue for future public art initiatives.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

9. Revitalization Strategies

The DRI/NYF strategies that the project addresses and their alignment with relevant DRI/NYF and REDC strategies should be addressed in this section.

Example | Enhance and Activate Downtown Public Spaces

DRI STRATEGIES:

- **Increase access to recreational, cultural, and family-friendly activities and amenities.** Improvements to the park and adjacent plaza will provide enhanced access to recreation resources and opportunities for expanded programming.
- **Build a concentration of activities and services around downtown anchors to attract visitors and extend their stay.** As a popular place for festivals and events, the proposed improvements will enhance the venues for those events and provide the opportunity for new programming. In turn, these improvements will attract visitors and spur economic growth.
- **Provide a network of public spaces that support year-round activities.** Reconfiguring and expanding this park will further activate this public space allowing for more diverse uses and larger public events.
- **Integrate green infrastructure, landscaping, art, and other amenities throughout public spaces to increase resilience to climate change and establish a sense of place.** The proposed improvements include new landscaping with native plantings, a new outdoor performance space, and public art to highlight the area's cultural identity and establish a distinct sense of place.

REDC STRATEGIES:

- **Facilitate growth of tourism opportunities.** This project supports travel and tourism by supporting larger and more diverse events, which will draw more people into the city's downtown. This project will also support the growing hub of small businesses adjacent to the plaza and help create new economic development opportunities.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

10. Decarbonization

Project profiles are required to include a description of the decarbonization techniques that the project sponsor is proposing to include in the project. This section should also include a description of where the project is in the development process (e.g., has engaged an architect, has fully formed architectural plans, concept development, etc.) and whether the project has already included or intends to include an energy consultant on the team to guide energy efficiency and decarbonization techniques. Further, this section should indicate the compliance path the project sponsor plans to use as well as the energy efficiency budget. Any incentives or energy efficiency programs that the project intends to explore and/or apply for should also be described.

Examples

New Construction

As a newly constructed building greater than 5,000 square feet, the proposed project must satisfy DRI/NYF decarbonization requirements. The project sponsor elects to demonstrate this by meeting the NYStretch Energy Code. A designated team member will be included to guide energy efficiency and decarbonization strategies during project design and an energy model may be developed to inform the design and document compliance with the performance path in NYStretch. Strategies will include LED lighting, high efficiency HVAC and water heating equipment and distribution, properly insulated walls, floors and roof and

high-performance windows. Electrical systems will be sized for a future solar electric system and the design may include electric HVAC and water heating systems.

Renovation of Existing Building

This proposed project meets the threshold for decarbonization as the project has an area of 7,000 SF, and it meets three of substantial renovation criteria. The project sponsor has engaged an architect to help scope the project. The project scope will include replacing the HVAC with heat pumps, eliminating the current gas heating units located throughout the building. The building's envelope will be fitted with a combination of spray foam and fiber glass insulation to greatly reduce current utility costs. As part of the exterior historic preservation work, all windows and framing will be fitted with low-E glass and foam insulation to fill the voids of the wood framing. The project sponsor has engaged an energy engineer to help design these upgrades. The cost estimate for this project includes extra allowances in the line items for HVAC, electrical upgrades, and building envelope upgrades that may go beyond the measures listed above. It is not determined at this time whether additional financial incentives will be sought. The expected compliance path is through demonstrating an Energy Star score of 90 or better using the EPA Target Finder Calculator.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

11. Resiliency

A description of how the project considers/ incorporates resiliency, as applicable, is required in this section. For example, projects may include natural measures such as bioswales, rain gardens, living shorelines, green roofs, etc. to address resiliency while providing additional benefits like habitat provision, aesthetic enhancement, or urban heat island mitigation.

If the project is within a flood hazard area, this section should describe what measures and techniques will be incorporated into the project to mitigate flood risk. This should include a description of the natural measures, if any, that are being proposed to enhance resiliency. Examples include, but are not limited to: bioswales, rain gardens, living shorelines, green roofs, tree planting, and preservation of open space.

Example

The proposed mixed-use development is located in the 1% annual chance FEMA flood zone and is occasionally subject to flood events due to extreme precipitation. This new development adheres to standard development requirements and will be built two feet above the base flood elevation as identified in the FEMA flood zone maps. Added measures to help effectively manage potential flooding impacts include installation of a robust living shoreline along the waterfront, which will provide risk reduction benefits and habitat provision for various species, among other benefits. The project will also include a centralized open space that can absorb precipitation and filter stormwater during heavy rain events. Throughout the project area, there will be subsurface infrastructure improvements and planting of native species to capture stormwater. The buildings themselves will feature rooftop generators with all electrical and mechanical equipment in protected spaces at a grade above the 500-year floodplain.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

12. Project Synergies

Synergies between the proposed DRI/NYF project and other proposed DRI/NYF projects should be described in this section. A description of the synergies between the proposed project and non-DRI/NYF projects should also be included.



| City of Amsterdam (DRI Round 3)

Example

Expansion and improvement of the museum will visually enhance downtown while drawing new people who may patronize local businesses. Other DRI projects that will support and complement this project are:

- *Façade Improvement Program – The focus area of this program is along Main Street where the museum is located, creating a concentrated area of building and façade improvements.*
- *Branding, Marketing, and Wayfinding – This project focuses on the area of Main Street and will help visitors locate areas of interest, including the expanded and improved museum.*

The museum also complements other non-DRI projects including:

- *Main Street Complete Streets Program – This project funded by NYSDOT will create safer travel for pedestrians, slow vehicular traffic, and improve public transit and parking access for visitors, increasing opportunities for the museum to draw vehicular, pedestrian and public transit riders to it.*
- *Main Street Park – The park recently received NYS OPRHP funding to improve accessibility and site amenities and is directly adjacent to the museum. This will allow visitors an opportunity to utilize the park after their visit or take a break and enjoy their lunch from the museum café at one of the newly installed park tables and benches.*

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

13. Public Support

The level of public support for the project should be described, including any key project elements that were strongly supported by the community. If applicable, this section should also refer to any specific outreach and documented support for a project that was outside the DRI/NYF public engagement process (e.g., comprehensive plan, letters of support, non-DRI/NYF public meetings, etc.)

Examples

- *Many residents and LPC members expressed support for renovating this iconic building. Based on the feedback from Community Meeting 1, 92% of the Village’s poll respondents expressed support for maintaining the historic integrity of buildings in downtown. Moreover, 67% of community respondents showed support for more diverse retail options in the downtown area. This project provides an excellent opportunity to both maintain the historic integrity of downtown through renovating existing buildings while also adding additional options for retail stores. Additionally, the survey results from Community Meeting 2 indicate that a majority of respondents felt that this project was highly aligned with local goals (73%), state criteria for DRI projects (61%), and has high transformative potential (63%).*
- *Previous community outreach efforts of the city and the county have demonstrated strong support for the restoration of the city core and for mixed-use redevelopment. During the DRI planning process, this project had strong support by participants due to the perceived economic and aesthetic benefits of redevelopment and revitalization. The LPC felt that this was an important project that needed to be addressed, especially as the building has significant critical safety needs that have the potential to impact other downtown buildings.*

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

14. Project Budget

A firm and detailed cost estimate that includes a breakdown of sources and uses of funding is required for each proposed project. The budget should be developed using the following guidelines:

- All projects must use the [prescribed budget table](#). The budget should be broken down into specific component activities or into grouped activities for each budget line.
- Public improvement projects should be broken down into component activities, including relevant soft costs. For example, a streetscape project could include itemized activities such as design and engineering, sidewalk installation, street furniture (benches, planters, trash receptacles, etc.), or asphalt resurfacing.
- New building or rehabilitation project activities can be grouped into a singular “construction” activity, but activities associated with soft costs, site improvements, or other non-building construction should also be broken down into component parts.
- A DRI/NYF small project fund budget should have separate line items for administration expenses, soft costs, and the proposed fund activity (e.g., façade rehabilitation, permanent machinery, etc.). The budget table should include any local match and/or private owner match. Matching requirements will be established by the DRI/NYF LPC as local conditions warrant matching requirements must be no less than 25% of the total cost per project.
- Branding, marketing, and wayfinding projects should be broken down into component activities. For example, a branding and wayfinding project may include activities such as branding design, wayfinding program design, and fabrication and installation of wayfinding signage.
- All budgets should include specific soft costs if required for the project. Soft costs should be broken down into design, engineering, legal, and other soft costs to the extent practicable.
- Contingency amounts should be appropriately factored into budget line items and not shown in a separate line.

SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

- The funding source for each line item should be specifically identified to the best knowledge of the project sponsor. It must be clear what components of the project will be paid for with DRI/NYF funds and other sources of funding. Sources of funding other than the DRI/NYF may include private equity or financing, tax credits, or other public funding or financing; and bond documents, memorandum of understanding, contracts, or other instruments. If the project sponsor does not have specific funding sources identified for project activities, that must be explained in the Budget Narrative section. The status of all funding sources must be stated in the budget table using the following definitions:
 - **Secured:** This funding source and amount of funding is guaranteed, and documentation has been provided demonstrating that the funding will be available at the time of project implementation.
 - **Anticipated:** This funding source is reasonably expected to be available at the time of project implementation, but the project sponsor does not have the funds currently available. This status may apply for funding sources such as loans, bonds, or fees.
 - **Requested:** The project sponsor has submitted a request to a funding entity for the amount identified but has not received confirmation of funding. This category is appropriate for the DRI/NYF funding source or other grants.
 - **Undetermined:** This funding source has not been secured, and the project sponsor has not fully identified the funding sources and amounts. This status may be appropriate for projects that anticipate a capital campaign, but no activity has yet occurred to obtain those funds.
- All project budget line items should be rounded to the nearest \$1,000, meaning the total project cost and DRI/NYF request amounts will be rounded to the nearest \$1,000.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

Example | Create the Regional Health & Wellness Center

| Activity | Amount | Funding Source | Status of Funds |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Construction | \$4,340,000 | DRI | Requested |
| | \$6,481,000 | Bank Loan | Anticipated |
| | \$500,000 | RG&E | Requested |
| | \$200,000 | Restore NY | Requested |
| | \$100,000 | ESD Capital | Requested |
| | \$530,000 | Capital Campaign | Undetermined |
| | \$470,000 | ARPA Funding | Secured |
| Permitting / Inspections | \$198,000 | Bank Loan | Anticipated |
| Design | \$352,000 | Bank Loan | Anticipated |
| Construction Administration | \$831,000 | Bank Loan | Anticipated |
| Total DRI/NYF Funding Request | | | \$4,340,000 |
| Total Funding from Other Sources | | | \$9,662,000 |
| Total Project Cost | | | \$14,002,000 |
| % Requested of Total Project Cost | | | 31% |

Example | Enhance Streetscaping Along Main Street

| Activity | Amount | Funding Source | Status of Funds |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| Stamped Asphalt | \$69,000 | DRI | Requested |
| Asphalt Resurfacing | \$162,000 | | |
| Median Landscaping | \$312,000 | | |
| Sidewalk Widening | \$78,000 | | |
| Retaining Wall Repair | \$67,000 | | |
| Decorative Fencing | \$57,000 | | |
| Design and Engineering | \$112,000 | | |
| Total DRI/NYF Funding Request | | | \$857,000 |
| Total Funding from Other Sources | | | N/A |
| Total Project Cost | | | \$857,000 |
| % Requested of Total Project Cost | | | 100% |

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

15. Budget Narrative

The budget narrative must explain how the cost estimate was developed and verified. If contingency is included in the project budget, the percentage of contingency and justification for that amount of contingency should be explained. The status of funding, particularly for all funding that is not secured, must be explained, and a timeline and/or plan for obtaining the unsecured funding should be discussed. The project sponsor should be able to provide documentation of the status of other funding sources. If there have been previous investments in the project, they should be discussed in this section; however, those activities should not be in the proposed project budget as the project budget should only account for planned/future activities.

Example

The project budget, which is based on standard construction estimating methods, was prepared by a licensed architect familiar with the proposed design improvements associated with this project. The 7% contingency included in the budget is within the typical range for this type of project to account for unanticipated project modifications. The sponsor has identified four sources of funding needed to complete the project. The first source of funding, which represents 40% of the overall project budget, is the requested DRI funding. The second source of funding, which represents 30% of the overall project budget, is the project sponsor's cash equity. This funding is secured in the form of a mortgage that is supported by a commitment letter from the bank in the amount stated in the project budget.

The third source of funding, which represents 20% of the overall project budget, is currently being raised through a capital campaign. The project sponsor has secured approximately half of the goal amount and anticipates reaching the campaign goal within one year. The final source of funding, which represents 10% of the overall project budget, will be secured through the NY State and Federal Historic Tax Credit Programs. A Part 1 form has already been submitted, and Part 2 will be submitted if and when DRI funds are awarded to the project. The property is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places and the project architect specializes in historic preservation. Therefore, it is anticipated that the proposed work will meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and the tax credits will be approved.

SECTION 5.4 PROJECT PROFILES

16. Project Feasibility and Impact

This section must demonstrate the feasibility of the project and characterize the potential impact and benefits of the project on the downtown and the surrounding region. To demonstrate feasibility for a private project, this section should discuss economic assessments, pro-formas, market studies, and/or other analyses, as appropriate. It could also incorporate findings from the downtown profile and assessment to support the need for housing or a certain class of housing or commercial development. For a public project or not-for-profit project, there could be a reference to a community need (potentially identified in the downtown profile and assessment) or other evidence that demonstrates the local and/or regional demand and/or interest in the project's long-term viability. In characterizing the potential impact and benefits, this section should describe the economic, environmental, climate resilience, health, and social impacts, as applicable, of the proposed project. These should be context-specific and clearly explain the connection between the impact/benefit and the project.

Example

The proposed project will help address the housing shortage in the community, and it has been demonstrated that the local market can absorb additional housing. The project sponsor commissioned a third-party preliminary market study, which established the appropriate number of units that can be absorbed so there is no possibility of over-building and vacancy, the appropriate mix of units according to bedroom size, and the appropriate income targeting and rents.

The market study also determined the number of units that the local housing demand supports, as well as the proposed rents based on working household incomes locally and county-wide. The market study

identified that approximately 80% of expected tenants will come from the Primary Market Area. It also indicated that the housing units are expected to be rented at a rate of eight units per month, with an especially strong demand for studios and one-bedroom apartments. The project is anticipated to house approximately 130 people.

This project will immediately result in removing an abandoned, blighted, and unsafe building. Constructing the proposed housing project will also increase housing options for the local workforce, which will benefit the business community and strengthen economic development ventures in the region. New housing will also provide a larger year-round residential population creating a greater customer base for local businesses and helping to stabilize the declining school population. The availability of workforce housing may also give private investors more confidence to launch a brand-new business or project. The project will promote housing stability, economic revitalization, and quality-of-life improvement for residents.

Further, the community has experienced a significant rise in housing prices due to the increase in short-term rentals and pandemic-related migration. These factors have made it difficult for local workers and residents to afford housing, and housing prices for both owners and renters are expected to continue to rise. This project will address the need for housing at affordable price points, enabling the community's workforce to live in the community and for existing residents to age in place.

Additionally, this project is projected to generate a tax benefit of approximately \$80,000 per year through a proposed payment-in-lieu of taxes arrangements, a fiscal benefit compared with zero tax revenue generated by the property for the past 20 years.

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

17. Regulatory Requirements

Addressing regulatory requirements, such as consistency with the comprehensive plan, other locally adopted plans, and the zoning code; required state and local approvals; SEQRA status; permitting status; or potential regulatory hurdles is required in this section. Further, if a project requires a re-zoning or a variance, that should be noted in this section and appropriately incorporated into the project timeline.

Example

The proposed project is consistent with the city's comprehensive plan and meets the use requirements established in the zoning code. Final plan approvals will need to be obtained from the Planning Board, and SEQRA review will be undertaken at that time. The project sponsor may need to obtain area variances from the Zoning Board of Appeals for not meeting setback requirements, but these are not anticipated to be substantial requests. All local building, electrical, and plumbing permits will be obtained at the time of construction.



Representative Rendering of a Proposed Project (Fulton DRI Round 4)

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

18. Images of Current and Proposed Conditions

At a minimum, each project is required to include an image of the current conditions and at least one perspective rendering or visual representation of the site and/or project when it is complete. All project renderings and visuals must be high-quality and should be developed with a consistent style. Site plans or additional imagery from the project sponsor may be included to supplement the rendering(s) or visual representation of the project.



I Representative Rendering of a Proposed Project (New Rochelle DRI Round 3)

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES



| Representative Rendering of a Proposed Project (Auburn DRI Round 3)



| Representative Rendering of a Proposed Project (Little Falls DRI Round 5)

SECTION 5.4

PROJECT PROFILES

19. Timeframe for Implementation

This section should include a general timeframe and phasing for implementation with milestones and deliverables. Immediate next steps should be expressed in the anticipated number of months (e.g., prepare engineering design documents [2 months], permit submissions, review, and approval [3 months]).

If applicable, describe any preliminary work already completed that is part of this project (e.g., engineering and design, property acquisition, permits or approvals, capital infrastructure improvements, etc.). Additional preliminary work that is planned and funded, but not yet completed must be described.

This section should also include anticipated start and completion dates. If precise dates are not available, a general timeframe with milestones is acceptable [Q4 2022, October 2022, Fall 2022]. State contracting timelines should be considered in the project timeline. The earliest execution of grant agreements will occur six months from the project award announcement. Costs associated with the project cannot begin until a contract has been executed with the designated state agency or authority.

The table below shows how the timeframe for implementation should be presented.

Example

| Anticipated Start Date: Spring 2024 | |
|--|------------------|
| PROJECT STAGE | TIMEFRAME |
| Design, Engineering, Bid Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit design and engineering services Develop construction documents Obtain necessary permits and approvals Issue bid documents Award bid to selected contractor | 10 Months |
| Construction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demolition of existing building Site work Construction of new building | 15 Months |
| Total Timeframe | 25 Months |
| Anticipated Completion Date: Spring 2026 | |

SECTION 5.5

Finalizing the Slate of Proposed Projects

Overview

From LPC Meeting #3 to the conclusion of the planning process, the LPC will focus on identifying, reviewing, and evaluating projects. During this process, the LPCs may have to narrow down the list of proposed projects into a final slate of projects. When doing so, the LPC may consider public support, the community's vision, goals, and revitalization strategies, and local project evaluation criteria as they identify a final slate of recommended projects.

LPC Project Evaluation

At the third LPC meeting, prior to reviewing the proposed projects identified through public engagement activities, the LPC will develop local project evaluation criteria using the State criteria as a guide.

The local evaluation criteria developed by the LPC, along with the community's vision, goals, and strategies, will guide the LPC members in their discussion of projects throughout the planning process, as they narrow the proposed project list into a final slate of projects. This will occur iteratively over the course of LPC Meetings #3-6 as more project information becomes available through the consultant team's ongoing project development work with the project sponsors.



Westbury LPC Meeting (DRI Round 1)

SECTION 5.5

FINALIZING SLATE OF PROPOSED PROJECTS

State Evaluation Criteria

The DRI/NYF project evaluation criteria used by the State should serve as a guide for LPCs as they develop project evaluation criteria specific to their community's needs and goals. The LPC may use the State's criteria below as a guide to build on.

- **State and Local Goals.** The project should be aligned with State and local goals and demonstrate strong community support.
- **Project Readiness.** The project should be well-developed and poised to proceed in the near-term in a way that will jump start the redevelopment of the DRI/NYF area.
- **Catalytic Effect.** The project is likely to have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of the downtown by attracting other public and private investment at a scale appropriate for the DRI/NYF community.
- **Co-Benefits.** The project will result in secondary benefits to both the community and project developer, beyond the primary goal of the project itself, which will generate additional economic activity, grow the local property tax base, improve quality of life in the neighborhood, and/or result in improved buildings likely to create healthier, more comfortable, and productive environments in which to live and work.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** Investment of DRI/NYF funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.

Characteristics of the Final Project List

For DRI communities, the final slate of projects should total between \$12-15 million in DRI funding requests. For NYF communities, this final project list should total approximately between \$4-5 million (for communities awarded \$2.25 million) or \$6-8 million (for communities awarded \$4.5 million) in NYF funding requests. It is essential that the LPC select a slate of projects with a total funding request in excess of the DRI/NYF grant award. A larger slate of projects will allow the State to evaluate a broader range of projects recommended by the LPC, while ensuring that there are enough viable projects in case one or two projects do not ultimately come to fruition or if selected projects receive funding from another source.

The LPC should also ensure that the removal of one project from the final project list will not result in a total DRI/NYF funding request that is less than the community was awarded. For example, if a NYF community receives a \$4.5 million award and submits a final slate of projects that totals \$6 million, no one project should request more than \$1.5 million in NYF funding. Finally and importantly, the final proposed project list should not be prioritized — every project should be one that the LPC and community would be excited to see implemented.



1 City of Lockport (DRI Round 3)

A group of people, including men and women, are standing in a room with colorful murals on the walls. The murals feature various abstract designs, including swirls, geometric shapes, and patterns. The people are dressed in business casual attire and are smiling. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

SECTION 6.0

Project Implementation

In this Section:

SECTION 6.1 **Project Awards**

SECTION 6.2 **Contracting with the State**

SECTION 6.3 **Downtown Management and Grant Administration**



SECTION 6.1

Project Awards

After final submission of the Strategic Investment Plan, projects recommended for Downtown Revitalization Initiative or NY Forward funding will be selected following a careful review by the State.

Overview

Upon final submission of the Strategic Investment Plan, projects recommended for Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) or NY Forward (NYF) funding will be carefully reviewed by the State based on how well each project achieves the following criteria:

- **State and Local Goals.** The project should be aligned with State and local goals and demonstrate strong community support.
- **Project Readiness.** The project should be well-developed and poised to proceed in the near-term in a way that will jump start the redevelopment of the DRI/NYF area.
- **Catalytic Effect.** The project is likely to have a significant positive impact on the revitalization of the downtown by attracting other public and private investment at a scale appropriate for the DRI/NYF community.
- **Co-Benefits.** The project will result in secondary benefits to both the community and project developer, beyond the primary goal of the project itself, which will generate additional economic activity, grow the local property tax base, improve quality of life in the neighborhood, and/or result in improved buildings likely to create healthier, more comfortable, and productive environments in which to live and work.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** Investment of DRI/ NYF funds in the project would represent an effective and efficient use of public resources.

SECTION 6.1

PROJECT AWARDS



Gov. Hochul and Secretary of State Rodriguez Announcing DRI Funding Awards in Little Falls (DRI Round 5)

SECTION 6.2

Contracting with the State

Overview

Projects selected for a DRI/NYF award will be assigned to an appropriate state agency or authority to manage the contract for implementation of the project. The state agency or authority selected and method of contracting and funding disbursement will be dependent on the specific project. While there may be some variation between agency or authority administration and the project type, in general awarded project funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis. It should be noted that DRI/NYF funds may be used as match for other grant funding if permitted by the granting agency or authority. However, the priority is to fund projects that are ready for implementation, with the expectation that all projects begin within two years from the time of the award.

DRI/NYF awards will be subject to all requirements typically attached to state funding, including but not limited to minority- and woman-owned business enterprise (M/WBE) goals, competitive procurement, grant reporting requirements, and prevailing wages, as appropriate. For example, prevailing wages will be required where required by State law. Prevailing wage provisions would need to be met for public works projects (such as those projects subject to the Wicks Law, etc.) or if it is a requirement of another funding source (as it is for U.S. Housing and Urban Development Community Planning and Development programs-Davis-Bacon).



SECTION 6.2

CONTRACTING



Ribbon Cutting at State Street Plaza, Auburn
(DRI Round 3)



What is a Reimbursable Grant?

A reimbursable grant is one where the grantee receives the grant funds only **after** expenses are incurred or in some cases, after a project has been successfully completed in its entirety. This means that a project sponsor must pay for the project costs, and then they will be reimbursed by the State once they achieve agreed-upon milestones.

SECTION 6.3

Downtown Management and Grant Administration

Overview

Local oversight and coordination of downtown projects is vital to the overall success of the DRI/NYF investments. To ensure efficient and coordinated implementation of DRI projects, it is expected that each community will designate a DRI/NYF point of contact who will provide consistent oversight and serve as a single point of contact regarding all DRI/NYF projects.

Each contracting state agency/authority (primarily DOS, ESD, and HCR) will be responsible for managing individual contracts with project sponsors; however, DOS will remain the lead for the state team and will be responsible for tracking progress of all DRI/NYF projects.



Albany Skyway (DRI Round 3)

SECTION 6.3

DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT AND GRANT ADMINISTRATION



| Clute Park Enhancements, Watkins Glen (DRI Round 2)

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